University of Alberta

The Nature of Adventure in Soft Adventure Tourism

by

Phil G. Burak ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment

of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled The Nature of Adventure in Soft Adventure Tourism submitted by Phil G. Burak in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Recreation and Leisure Studies.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the nature of adventure in soft adventure tourism as experienced by tourists. A phenomenological approach was used in order to gain insight into the lived experiences of fifteen individuals who had been involved in dog sledding, back country skiing, or horse/trail riding adventure tourism experiences. Descriptive accounts of co-researchers' experiences were provided in the form of interviews and protocols (written accounts).

The sixteen themes which emerged from the experiences of the co-researchers include: the imaginative experience; hesitation and doubt; fear; novelty; freedom; exploration; challenge; the unexpected; personal risk; remoteness; experiencing nature; the learning experience; the social experience; the comparative experience; transformation; and living history (being *with* another time and place).

The study makes the argument that there exist significant opportunities to incorporate adventure education opportunities within the soft adventure tourism experience. Implications for marketing adventure tourism experiences are also discussed.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all those who recognize and value adventure, and especially to those who make a practice of it.

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CHAPTER I

ADVENTURE EXPERIENCES

Introduction

Adventure and travel have been a valuable part of my life. It has been the sense of adventure which has motivated me to live and travel throughout the world in various capacities. For me, travel and adventure go hand in hand. I have always considered my travels as adventures, whether I was travelling on foot or in a canoe through the Canadian wilderness, or hitch-hiking or sightseeing in Europe. This is not to say that all of my adventures occurred during times of travel, especially since my adventurous inclinations began in my childhood. The following accounts, although not an exhaustive summary of my adventures, are representative of them, and will help express the sense of adventure as I have experienced it.

One incident, which comes to mind, occurred when I was just twelve years old. I was with two of my childhood friends as we ventured along the Niagara Escarpment's Bruce Trail. While we hiked I noticed that the ferns' brilliant green would sometimes cover large areas along the path. The moss on some of the logs was thick and green, and so soft to the touch! I noticed how different the trees were in comparison to the fruit trees I was used to on my farm and I wondered how old they were. I also enjoyed the smell. The fantastic fragrance of the trees, the leaves and all of the undergrowth was wonderful! I somehow knew intuitively that just breathing in the scent of the forest was good for me, that it was healthy just to *be* there. Later on we explored new territory as the three of us hiked well beyond an area we had never been. The changing condition of the trail, new rock formations, tree stumps and the different landscape features, all peaked our interest. It was not until we realized just how late in the day it was that we found ourselves miles from our homes. We practically ran all the way home as if the running would somehow turn back the hands of time. This kind of adventure was typical as I was growing up. My friends and I began to take off for a whole day at a time, exploring more of the Niagara Escarpment, new and interesting places, ponds, creeks, abandoned buildings and old barns.

Years later, my penchant for adventure would manifest itself in various modes of domestic and foreign travel. I love seeing new places. Visiting the many popular European tourist sites were as much of an adventure as my usual deviations off the beaten path, simply because it was a novel experience. I would also have to say that I thoroughly enjoyed the feeling of unexpectedness; to be in a situation where I had no way of knowing what the result would be. That is why I hitchhiked so often. I would often tell people that what I liked so much about hitchhiking was that I never knew who I was going to meet and I never really knew where I'd be staying that particular night. Did I travel safely? I don't know. I do know that I never really thought that I was taking risks. Risks were never considered a part of my travel adventures. Yes, I have encountered dangers and perceived dangers, but these were unexpected, not sought after, and most importantly only lasted brief moments.

In addition, I have always had a genuine interest in learning. I enjoy meeting people from distant lands and learning about their unique cultures; why they do what they do, their ways of life, their everyday lives, customs, and rituals. I've always been keen to learn about the history of the place that I visited, as well as the current events and trends of the time.

Another event is worth recounting. In 1984 I was a member of a 2,000 kilometre canoeing expedition which retraced the historical voyageur route from Montreal to Old Fort William in Thunder Bay. On the last leg of our journey, one morning on Lake Superior, the winds quickly picked up and the waves suddenly grew to a size much bigger than what we had become used to. Waves continuously crashed over the bow and the sides of our thirty-six foot canoes, making us cold, wet, and fearing for our lives. It was too rough to try and turn the huge crafts around and risk breaching the waves and tipping in the frozen waters. We had only one way to go and that was onward to Maple Island. A few hours later we reached the safety of the island and had to wait out the rough waters.

After a time, one of the crew members read from a copy of a passage of an actual journal from the fur trade era that would make our hair stand on end. It described how the voyageurs too had to seek refuge from the waves and wind, how they had been stranded on the same island, sometimes for days at a time, and how they eventually left the island during calm early mornings. The comparison was incredible. I felt in step with the voyageurs. Sixty-three days after our send off, we arrived at Old Fort William to the shouts, cheers and clapping of 8,000 people. I *am* a voyageur, I thought. I experienced what it was like to be a voyageur. Not only did I paddle the entire route, but I lived the life.

Finally, my adventures have not only come about through travel experiences. I have looked at life as an adventure. I've always been ready to try new things and to involve myself in new experiences. Sometimes my aim has been to challenge myself. Sometimes my purpose has been merely to see what happened, or more often, 'just for the experience'.

I began my graduate program knowing that I wanted to study some aspect of tourism but I had not yet focused my interest to a particular thesis topic. It wasn't until I had taken a tourism course that I eventually developed a specific interest in adventure tourism as an area of academic study. I felt a strong connection to the nature of adventure and adventure tourism, that it was an area in need and worthy of research, and that it was an area to which I could begin to make a significant academic contribution.

Why the Interest?

Tourism is rapidly becoming one of the largest industries in the world in terms of total travel expenditures (Whelan, 1991; Plog, 1991). One facet of this growth that has received particular attention is nature-based tourism which includes the specific market segment known as adventure tourism. This tourism niche market, consisting of both 'hard' and 'soft' adventure tours, is expanding rapidly with an estimated annual growth of 15 percent (Industry Canada and Tourism Canada, 1993, p. i). Hard adventure has been associated with high levels of risk, physical activity, and challenge which requires participants to be relatively physically fit (Mallet, 1992; Peterson, 1989; Rubin, 1989). Soft adventure tours are characterised by those less strenuous activities such as back country skiing, dog sledding, hiking, and horseback riding where previous skills are not required and where the prevalence of risk is low or nonexistent (Mallet, 1992; Peterson, 1989; Rubin, 1989). The growth in the adventure tourism market has seen an increase in the numbers of people who seek adventure travel experiences (Plog, 1991). However, the ways in which tourists experience adventure and their interpretation of it, is a situation which lacks formal study and presently remains unclear.

Most people have been exposed to the romanticism of adventure. People see and read accounts of others' high or grand adventures that are often associated with dangers, high risk, and challenge, in situations which require a degree of strength, skill, experience, and knowledge. However, the nature of adventure as experienced by those who increasingly participate in soft adventure tourism may inherently contain its own unique characteristics. One cannot necessarily assume that adventure, as portrayed in movies, novels, and actual travel journals, is the same as adventure in soft adventure tourism. Consequently, in order to understand the nature of adventure from tourists' perspectives, it is necessary to undertake academic research into participants' 'lived' experience.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the nature of adventure in soft adventure tourism as experienced by individuals who have engaged in a soft adventure tour. The study used phenomenological methods and textual data were gathered primarily through in-depth interviews and written descriptions. The following question guided the research:

What is the nature of adventure for participants who engage in soft adventure tourism experiences?

Overview of the Thesis

Chapter II (Exploring the Literature) introduces the reader to important concepts, theories and definitions of adventure and adventure tourism as well as literature related to the nature of the thesis. This chapter also provides a rationale behind the research methodology. Chapter III (Planning the Route) outlines for the reader both the phenomenological directions of the research and the methods taken in order to effectively explore the research question as stated above. The Experience of Adventure (Chapter IV) provides a thorough description of the experience of adventure based on the in depth qualitative data provided by the co-researchers. Chapter V (Adventure Notes) explores additional themes and issues as raised and presented by those involved in the study. Following the presentation of the descriptive data, Chapter VI (Toward A Broader Understanding of Adventure) explores various themes and characteristics of the adventure experience in relation to critical aspects of adventure and adventure tourism as discussed in the literature. Finally, Chapter VII (Upon Reflection) summarises the research study and offers insight into potential implications of the study for academics, tour operators, and professionals who have an interest in adventure tourism and other related sectors of the tourism industry.

CHAPTER II

EXPLORING THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight various key characteristics, definitions, concepts, and theories of adventure and adventure tourism, as well as related significant research. Initially, this literature review provides a definition of tourism and then discusses the importance of adventure tourism. Next, this review examines particular psychological theories which help to explain people's motivations for adventure travel, followed by definitions and meanings of adventure tourism and adventure. This literature review also reveals how adventure is perceived in terms of adventure pursuits and how fundamental concepts of adventure are utilized within the context of adventure education. A discussion on the perceptions, concepts, and theories of adventure serves to highlight areas of interest and concern in adventure tourism. Finally, the literature review explores some of the more prominent studies related to adventure tourism and establishes a connection between the literature and the methodology used in this study.

Tourism, a Definition

> A comprehensive definition of tourism suggests that it encompasses everything from the planning of the trip, the travel to the place, the stay itself, the return, and the reminiscences about it afterwards. It includes the activities the traveller undertakes as part of the trip, the purchases made, and the interactions that occur between host and guest. In sum, it is all of the activities and impacts that occur when a visitor travels. (Mill & Morrison, 1992, p. 9)

While understanding the relative importance of taking into consideration the nature of the setting where tourism takes place (e.g., Gunn, 1988), the definition serves to illustrate the inherent complexities of tourism experiences.

Given that tourism includes a number of 'activities', it is no wonder that the tourism industry is estimated to represent an annual US$ 3.5 trillion in global activity (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1993). Tourism is reportedly one of the fastest growing industries in the world (Aronsson, 1994) and the World Tourism Organization believes that tourism may be the world's largest industry by the year 2000 (as cited in Whelan, 1991).

The growth of the tourism industry has seen an increase in types of 'special interest' (Weiler & Hall, 1992) or 'alternative' forms of tourism (Smith & Eadington, 1992). For example, nature-based or green forms of tourism, which focus on the integrity of the natural environment, are alternatives to mass tourism. Other tourism typologies now include heritage, cultural, wilderness, and ecotourism, in addition to perhaps one of the more intriguing, adventure tourism.

The Importance of Adventure Tourism

Adventure tourism has found a place in the travel industry as a distinct segment of the international tourism market. Adventure tourism grew rapidly in the 1980s in New Zealand (Johnston, 1992). In Australia, the adventurous activity of gliding, is recognized as a contributing factor in attracting international tourists (Mules & Thomson, 1991). The state of Colorado prides itself as one of the top five 'adventure states' in the U.S. (Oden, 1995). In addition, adventure tourism has recently emerged as a successfully lucrative business in the Soviet Union (Arefyev & Mieczkowski, 1991).

Adventure tourism is also acknowledged as an important industry in Canada. In 1990, Tourism Canada published Adventure Travel in Eastern Canada: An Overview of Product and Market Potential. The Canada and New England chapters of the Travel and Tourism Research Association (TTRA) held a joint conference in 1993 which, in addition to marketing partnerships, emphasized adventure tourism. In the same year, the provincial governments of both Newfoundland and Labrador released a discussion paper which has acted as the foundation document for the development of a five-year adventure tourism strategy (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1993). Similarly, the government of New Brunswick implemented a 'Day Adventure Program' as part of its 1996-1998 provincial strategic plan. Unlike its eastern counterparts, however, the province of Alberta presently lacks a strategy for adventure tourism. Nonetheless, there remains at least some degree of recognition of the importance of adventure tourism (e.g., Strategic Plan for Tourism Product Development in Northern Alberta, 1994), albeit the majority of marketing and development efforts in Alberta occur on a small scale and at the level of individual tour operators.

In a report outlining the potential for market and development of Canadian adventure travel, Industry Canada and Tourism Canada (1993) stated that "adventure travel has become the fastest growing sector of the outdoor tourism market with an estimated annual growth of 15 percent over the last five years and is predicted to continue over the next five years" (p. i). The recently formed Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) has taken the place of what was formerly known as Tourism Canada. The industry-led Commission is currently marketing Canada's adventure products nationally and internationally (CTC, 1997a) and has also developed an Adventure Travel and Ecotourism Strategy for Canada (CTC, 1997b).

Clearly, promotional efforts are intensifying and adventure tourism markets are expanding. This phenomenon reflects an increasing demand for adventure travel, including soft adventure, as suggested in the 1994 report, Ecotourism-Nature/Adventure/Culture: Alberta and British Columbia Market Demand Assessment. It is evident that increasing numbers of people seek adventure travel experiences (Plog, 1991). These tourists are adventurous and wish to fulfil their desires for adventure.

Psychological Motivations for Adventure

Tourism research is said to be in its infancy, and notwithstanding its seemingly obvious connection to leisure and recreation, the lack of 'cross-fertilization' has been well documented (e.g., Butler, 1989). Despite this situation, however, many authors continually strive to reveal the extent to which leisure, recreation, and tourism are strongly interrelated (e.g., Colton, 1987; Jansen-Verbeke and Dietvorst, 1987; Mannell and Iso-Ahola, 1987; Smith and Godbey, 1991). In addition, the complex phenomenon of tourism is an area of interest among many disciplines which often adapt or borrow existing knowledge (and terminology) from each other (Przeclawski, 1993). Psychology is one of these important disciplines. Pearce (1993), for example, has recently shown the connection between leisure and tourism with respect to psychological motivations.

People's motivations for participating in adventure tourism activities may be explained from various psychological perspectives. For purposes of this research, it is more beneficial to discuss intrinsic motivational theories (as opposed to extrinsic) as they may be more closely related to what participants, in fact, experience.

One explanation why individuals participate in adventure travel is to experience what Maslow (1962) calls 'peak experience,' whereby individuals strive for self-actualization. Goldstein (1939) first presented the idea that self-actualization is realized by individuals who continually achieve their potentials, capacities, and talents (as cited in Ewert, 1989). During a peak experience, individuals feel a great sense of fulfilment, satisfaction, and happiness and the experience is further characterized by such accounts as on-task focused concentration, a transcendence of reality, intrinsic value in the experience, a sense of wonder and humility, an increase in confidence, and a concern solely on the present (Ewert, 1989).

Similar to the peak experience is the concept of 'flow' (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Csikszentmihalyi (1990) explains that a flow experience occurs in situations where all of an individual's skills are required and appropriately matched to meet a particular challenge. When skills and challenges are balanced, flow experiences occur, otherwise, an imbalance can either lead to a state of anxiety or boredom. During flow [illegible] people become so involved in what they are doing that the activity becomes spont[illegible] almost automatic; they stop being aware of themselves as separate from the actions they are performing" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 53). Csikszentmihalyi (1990) also reports that most optimal experiences occur during activities in which both goals and rules are prevalent.

Another theory which may explain why individuals participate in adventure tourism is described by Zuckerman (1994) as 'sensation seeking'. Sensation seeking is "a trait defined by the seeking of varied, novel, complex, and intense sensations and experiences, and the willingness to take physical, social, legal, and financial risks for the sake of such experience" (p. 27). Zuckerman (1994) has developed the sensation seeking scale (SSS) which people can be measured against according to the degree of sensation seeking. The scale is used to identify high and low sensation seekers among the general population. Low sensation seekers are averse to risk and see no reward in sensation seeking activities involving high levels of risk. High sensation seekers, on the other hand, are willing to accept high levels of risk. However, Zuckerman (1994) reports that risk-taking is not a key element of the definition and that it is not a crucial motivator of sensation seeking behaviour.

Zuckerman (1994) presents a model which shows the relationship between sensation seeking and anxiety states, as a function of novelty and appraised risk. The model reveals the following: (1) as appraised risk increases so do levels of anxiety, (2) the level of arousal increases to an optimal level during the 'novelty phase' of the experience, and (3) after the novelty stage the level of arousal decreases, at which point the level of anxiety may force the individual to withdraw from the activity.

A theory proposed by Plog (1991), portrays tourist behaviour based on a five-point psychographic scale with psychocentrics at one end and allocentrics at the other. Psychocentrics are essentially self-inhibited, non-adventuresome individuals who travel to familiar and known destinations. Allocentrics are characteristically self-confident, adventurous individuals who enjoy spontaneity in trips and exploring new places (Plog, 1991). According to Plog (1991) both allocentrics and near-allocentrics have a propensity for adventure travel.

Finally, psychologists have debated the theories of consistency and complexity to explain the nature of human behaviour. Consistency theorists suggest that individuals seek sameness, absence of conflict, and predictability (Mayo & Jarvis, 1981). The theory of complexity states that people strive for conditions of novelty, change, and unpredictability because they are satisfying (Mayo & Jarvis, 1981). These theories hold certain implications with respect to travel. Individuals who seek consistency will visit popular, well-known sites and travel well-known routes while those who favour complexity and seek change will travel to unusual or unique places, using new routes. Still, another view which Mayo and Jarvis (1981) prefer is one based on the premise that individuals seek both consistency and complexity, in turn, since too much of one can potentially lead to either extreme boredom or anxiety.

From a psychological perspective, participation in adventure tourism may be attributed to the seeking of flow or peak experiences. In terms of complexity theory, those participants pursue conditions of novelty, change, and unpredictability. In addition, participants of adventure tourism would rate on the high end of Zuckerman's SSS. Likewise, those adventurers, or high sensation seekers, are what Plog describes as allocentrics and near-allocentrics. Research that specifically target participants of adventure tourism could benefit from a better understanding of the connections between participant motivations for adventure and their actual adventure travel experiences.

Adventure travel will now be described in more detail.

Adventure Travel

Adventure Travel Defined

Despite its success as being recognized as a distinct market segment of the tourism industry, adventure tourism as a definitive product remains elusive. Adventure tourism is often associated with cultural tourism, nature tourism, and ecotourism (e.g., Wight, 1993), where elements of both cultural and adventure tourism may be experienced together. Similarly, ecological aspects of a tour are often incorporated within an adventure tour experience and vice versa. The same can be said about traveller motivations. For example, Eagles (1992) found that among the travel motivations of Canadian ecotourists, 'to be daring and adventurous' ranked 13 out of a possible 33 motivations. Therefore, it would appear that adventure tourism may include elements which have been more closely associated with cultural, nature, and ecotourism.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned associations, which adventure tourism may possess, the following definitions are illuminating. Tourism Canada (1993) defines adventure travel as

> an outdoor leisure activity that takes place in an unusual, exotic, remote or wilderness destination, involves some form of transportation, and tends to be associated with high level(s) of activity from which individuals draw personal satisfaction from some unusual sight, activity or accomplishment. (as cited in Williams, Stewart, & Campbell, 1994, p. 24)

A second definition of adventure travel is provided by the president of the Adventure Travel Society in the United States, who explains that "adventure travel is participatory, informational, interesting, exciting, unique and offers the opportunity to challenge one's self in an outdoor setting" (Mallet, 1992, p. 157). One significant difference between the two definitions is that the latter specifically includes 'challenge' while the former does not. Tourism Canada's definition also includes the ideas of 'satisfaction' and 'accomplishment'. By comparison, a more recent definition, put forth by the Canadian Tourism Commission (1995), excludes the concepts of satisfaction and accomplishment, by stating that adventure travel is "an outdoor leisure activity that generally takes place in an unusual, exotic, remote or wilderness setting, involves some form of unconventional means of transportation, and tends to be associated with high or low levels of physical activity" (p. 1).

At the same time, fundamental views of adventure travel are often offered. For example, Wilson (1991) suggests "an unquenchable appetite for the exotic and 'uncharted' distinguishes much adventure travel" (p. 49). By contrast, in a more recent attempt to reach a comprehensive definition, Sung, Morrison, and O'Leary (1997) submit that adventure travel is

> a trip or travel with the specific purpose of activity participation to explore a new experience, often involving perceived risk or controlled danger associated with personal challenges, in a natural environment or exotic outdoor setting. (p. 66)

The above definitions reveal the complexities involved in clearly identifying the characteristics which constitute adventure travel. Indeed, establishing a comprehensive definition of adventure travel remains a difficult task. Perhaps adding to the challenge is the fact that adventure tourism has been further segmented by those in the industry as well as academics.

Soft versus Hard Adventure Tourism

Travel and tourism agencies and professionals in the industry categorize adventure tourism as either 'soft' or 'hard' adventure tourism. Hard adventure has been associated with high risk, a high level of active involvement, challenging for the participant, and requiring the participant to be physically fit (Mallet, 1992; Peterson, 1989; Rubin, 1989). In contrast, soft adventure has been associated with such characteristics as low actual or real risk, less strenuous activities such as biking, hiking, and sailing, where previous skills are not required, and where the forms of accommodations are more comfortable as compared with hard adventure (Mallet, 1992; Peterson, 1989; Rubin, 1989).

Butler and Waldbrook (1991) describe soft adventure as 'passive' and while the difference between soft and hard tourism is not definitive, it is viewed as a 'range'. Christiansen (1990) describes this range as a continuum. Interestingly, Butler and Waldbrook (1991) note that the variation (between soft and hard adventure) is "based on the limits to the amount of physical discomfort a tourist is willing to experience" (p. 5). According to these authors, the level of 'physical discomfort' is the primary factor when distinguishing between soft and hard adventure tourism as opposed to other factors such as levels of risk, physical activity, and comfort.

According to the Canadian Tourism Commission (1995), however, the difference between soft and hard adventure tourism is dependent upon the "level of risk or physical exertion required" (p.1). The CTC (1995) reports that "soft adventure requires mild physical activity and involves little if any risk," while "hard adventure demands strenuous physical exertion and often requires that the participant prepare and/or train for the experience" (p. 1). More recently the Canadian national strategic framework for adventure travel and ecotourism (CTC, 1997) has added the dimension of skill as another distinguishing factor. Skill is not considered a prerequisite to involvement in soft adventure travel, while hard adventure travel requires "a level of skill" (CTC, 1997, p. 3).

The concept of adventure travel remains under debate. There are those who believe that tour operators purporting to offer 'soft' or 'no-risk' adventure tours only corrupt the concept of adventure travel which, by nature, inherently comprises some measure of risk (e.g., Mereo, 1992). In addition, it has been suggested that 'commercialized' adventure is not necessarily a 'false' adventure simply because of the 'personal' challenge it may present to certain participants (Shute, 1996).

An important consideration is whether these perceptions of soft and hard tourism imply that the nature of adventure itself, that is, the adventure experience, is the same in both soft and hard adventure experiences, and whether the same elements of adventure exist along the continuum of adventure experiences. These queries lead to the question of the nature of adventure.

The Nature of Adventure

To begin the discussion, and in order to gain some insight into the meaning of adventure, this literature review will examine next how adventure is viewed in adventure pursuits and how it is used in adventure education. This section will also probe concepts, definitions, and experiences of adventure.

Adventure Pursuits

An examination of adventure as perceived in adventure pursuits may lead to a deeper understanding of the concept of adventure. Ewert (1989) suggests that adventure pursuits includes "a variety of self-initiated activities utilizing an interaction with the natural environment, that contain elements of real or apparent danger, in which the outcome, while uncertain, can be influenced by the participant and circumstance" (p. 6). He adds that outdoor adventure pursuits involve a "deliberate seeking of risk and uncertainty of outcome often referred to as adventure" (Ewert, 1989, p. 8). In addition, the author adds that risk taking is 'central' to the activity in outdoor adventure pursuits (Ewert, 1989). Ewert (1989) also makes a distinction between real risk and apparent risk and states that risks can be estimated and controlled. In outdoor adventure pursuits, adventure can be experienced in an environment of apparent risk rather than real risk since adventure is subjective. The concepts of apparent and real risks will be discussed later in this literature review.

Adventure Education (utilizing the adventure experience)

The foundation of adventure education is based on the writings of Plato and his student Aristotle. They believed that the best method of raising children in order for them to become responsible leaders was through direct experience (Hunt, 1990). The idea was that children would be directly involved in war, at their parents' side. It was through this firsthand experience in war that they would learn the four virtues of wisdom, bravery, temperance, and justice (Hunt, 1990). Hence, children would learn bravery by being brave.

In the twentieth century, James (1949) recognized that there was no moral equivalent of war, insofar as virtues were concerned. Subsequently, he strongly believed that a substitute was needed that would effect desired virtues (as cited in Hunt, 1990). Kurt Hahn elaborates,

> We can make the glamour of war fade only by introducing drama into the life of a nation at peace. The young hunger for adventure. They long to be tested, to prove their reserves. This longing can be driven underground, but there it will remain in unconscious readiness for a false prophet who will turn the scales in favour of violence. (As cited in Coffin, 1977, p. 183)

Kurt Hahn eventually acted on the concepts of Plato, Aristotle, and James and founded Outward Bound, a school that used adventure as a means to teaching virtues to young people. The Outward Bound process is described as follows:

> A motivated, committed student is placed into a *UNIQUE, UNFAMILIAR PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT* and into a *UNIQUE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT* that

> allows individuality and group consciousness, conflict and resolution. He or she is then given *PROBLEM SOLVING TASKS, CHALLENGES* that are organized, concrete, incremental and manageable and that draw on mental, physical and emotional resources. This leads to *STRESS AND ANXIETY*, which the student adapts to through *INCREASED COMPETENCE AND MASTERY*. This process results in *EXPANDED CAPABILITY*, including increased self-awareness, increased self-esteem, and increased acceptance of and service to others. (Pacific Crest Outward Bound School, 1994, p. 9)

Since the inception of the Outward Bound model, a great many 'adventure-based' programs have been developed throughout North America and the world which are based, in part, on the initial model. While recognizing the importance of adventure in the development of youth, some national institutions even go as far as establishing lofty objectives such "that every young person in the United Kingdom has the opportunity to take part in adventurous outdoor activities" (Hunt, nd, p. 238).

Adventure education is concerned with interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships, how people get along in a group and how individuals get along with themselves. It is built on the premise that "change may take place in groups and individuals from direct and purposeful exposure to: challenge, adventure, and new growth experiences" (Priest, 1990a, p. 114). Adventure education strives to improve people's perceptions of their capabilities and to provide for situations where individuals learn about themselves and how they relate to others. Activities in adventure education programs often include: (1) problem solving, which involves decision making, judgment, cooperation, communication, and trust, and (2) challenge, which includes situations where individuals are able to test their competence against mental, social and physical risks, where risks may be real or perceived (Priest, 1990a).

Adventure Defined

Adventure has been conceptualized in many ways. The following discussion highlights some of the main ideas of adventure based on theoretical, socio-psychological perspectives, and practical experiences of scholars and adventurers.

An historical perspective is essential to begin this discussion on the meaning of adventure. Green (1993) explains that the concept of adventure historically originated from a Caucasian male perspective, and that it is associated with the concepts of frontier and empire. Moreover, Green (1993) writes "...to engage in adventure means to engage in violence, but associated with violence are certain kinds of virtue, like leadership, cunning, endurance, courage, and so on. Adventure shows us heroes, men acting with power" (p. 4). Thus, adventure is also rooted in the pursuit and development of power (Green, 1993).

Today's North American concept of adventure may be far different from the notions of war and violence, especially as it concerns adventure travel. However, at least one author addresses the inherent 'dangers' in travel to remote corners of the world. Tarr (1968) suggests that both hand-to-hand combat and survival skills are a necessity in 'training' for a life of adventure and travel.

Adventure, as it is known today, is believed to be a recent phenomenon

(Bonington, 1981). Nonetheless, Ardrey (1976) contends that the sense of adventure is a primordial drive or 'biological demand' which enabled the human species to advance throughout the ages (as cited in Quinn, 1990). Nansen (1967) also believes that adventure is, intrinsically, a part of human nature.

This literature review has shown how adventure can benefit participants in various fashions, including the development of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. Such new-growth experiences, it is believed, can also reach a spiritual level. Quinn (1990) believes that peace is a distinct outcome of adventure. Henderson (1996) addresses the idea of experiencing adventure, not in terms of ‘physical hardship’ or ‘overcoming’ nature, but instead, “to see one’s place in a grand design at the level of the comforted soul” (p. 140). In this manner, one may embark on “an adventure of the spirit” (Henderson, 1996, p. 140). Similarly, Walle (1997) proposes a new model of adventure where the participant is primarily driven by an interest in gaining insight.

The above-mentioned concepts of adventure begin to reveal its complex character and its many faces. In addition, Vester (1987) theorizes that adventure is a multidimensional field of experience and investigation. The six interdependent dimensions of adventurous activity and experience are presented as: territoriality, duration, coping, transcendence, risk, and routinization (Vester, 1987). Quinn (1990) maintains that self-knowledge is an inevitable outcome of adventure and believes that doubt is ever-present in adventures, and as such, is an essential element. Other elements of adventure can be gleaned from more formal definitions.

Websters Third New International Dictionary (1986) offers a contemporary definition of adventure as "a dangerous or risky undertaking ... the encountering of risks" in addition to "a chance occurrence: an unplanned event ... an enterprise or performance involving the uncertain or unknown ... a novel, exciting, or otherwise remarkable event or experience" (p. 31). Likewise, the meaning of 'adventurous' is "characterized by dangers and risks or by new or unknown situations" (Websters Third New International Dictionary, 1986, p. 31). Based on these definitions alone, it is reasonable to question whether they suggest that all elements are necessary in order for an adventure to occur or whether the presence of only select elements in themselves are required to sufficiently characterize an experience as adventure. At this stage it may be too early to conjecture. Consequently, it would be advantageous to examine the nature of adventure through actual experiences.

Chris Bonington, a world famous Mt. Everest expedition leader and adventurer has compiled accounts of a number of modern-day grand adventures in his book Quest for Adventure, in which he attempts to discover common elements among the descriptions of the adventures. The stories, which contain actual travel log entries and interviews, include such adventures as the Kon-Tiki expedition, the crossing of the Antarctica, and the Apollo XI mission which placed the first man on the moon. Bonington (1983) sees adventure as a challenge of the body as well as the mind. This view is similar to Anderson's (1970) concept of individuals driven by the 'Ulysses Factor' who satisfy their need to explore through the utilization of both their physical and intellectual faculties.

Bonington (1983) merges both motivations for adventure and elements of adventure in his final analysis and finds that each venture described in his book "represents a plunge into the unknown, to try to satisfy man's insatiable curiosity about himself and his own reactions to stress or danger, to find the boundaries of his physical capability or that of his craft. In each is some level of risk" (p. 303). Bonington (1983) also adds that the nature of adventure includes: an acute awareness of beauty, a competitive urge and gratification of ego for goal-oriented adventurers, elation of being in control of a crisis and of self, a sense of attunement to surroundings, and the need to succeed.

The most inspiring notions of adventure, perhaps, are presented as ideals for both humanity and civilization. Nansen (1967), a Norwegian adventurer of the late nineteenth century and Nobel Peace Prize laureate, believes that along with courage and independence, people require the 'spirit of adventure' in their lives. It is the spirit of adventure which is needed in order to "overcome the present difficulties" of the world, thus, "making life deeper, and higher and nobler" (Nansen, 1967, p. 41). Similarly, Whitehead (1947) contends that adventure is important for the promotion and preservation of civilization. This perspective is reflected in the following passage:

> A race preserves its vigour so long as it harbours a real contrast between what has been and what may be; and so long as it is nerved by the vigour to adventure beyond the safeties of the past. Without adventure civilization is in full decay. (p. 360)

This view is shared by Vilhjamur Stefansson, an Arctic explorer of the early 1900's, as he declares "one attribute of a high civilization is a development of the spirit of adventure, of the will to experiment" (as cited in Shute, 1996, p. G1). Finally, Anderson (1970) asserts that adventure is a genetic survival factor which is "of value to the survival of race, tribe and family within the human species, and while the species survives more or less as we know it, this factor must survive in one form or another" (p. 80).

Discussion

Thus far, the author has reviewed and examined various views and concepts of adventure and adventure tourism. This literature review will now examine the relationship between adventure and adventure tourism. Table 1 summarizes the characteristics and elements of adventure and adventure tourism as outlined in this literature review.

From the discussion of adventure pursuits and adventure education, it becomes clear that risks are considered to be either real or apparent. Real risks are considered actual risks. However, risks are also apparent, or perceived. That is, they are subjective and are based on individual experience and interpretation. In adventure pursuits and education a novice rockclimber typically has a perception of the risks as being far above the real level of actual risks. As the novice gains in experience, as he or she continues to rockclimb in the same place, their assessment of the risk, or the level of perceived risk decreases. Moreover, the discussion has revealed that the nature of risk has three dimensions, within the context of adventure education. Risks may be mental, social, and physical. When risks are mentioned, it is typical to think of physical risks, but in adventure education programs, mental and social risks are prominent and play an

Table 1 Characteristics of Adventure

Based on Tourism Literature	*Based on Adventure Literature (Non-tourism)*	
Soft Adventure Tourism		**Adventure**
- more comfortable accommodations		
- low or no risk (real, physical) - less strenuous activity	Anderson (1970)	- Ulysses Factor, (both physical and intellectual)
- no previous skills necessary	Ardrey (1976)	- a primordial drive
- a 'passive' adventure **Hard Adventure Tourism** - low level accommodations (ie. rustic) - higher level of risk (real, physical) - challenging for participant - involves physical (vigorous) effort	Bonnington (1983)	- satisfy curiosity of self & reactions to stress/danger, competitive - find limits of physical capabilities & craft - elation of control of crisis/self - awareness of beauty - attunement to surroundings - challenge of body & mind
- highly active participation - requires physical fitness - self-propelled transport - unconventional means of transport	Ewert (1989)	- deliberate seeking of risk and uncertainty of outcome - risk-taking is 'central' to activity - risks controlled by participant
- setting (wilderness, natural env.) - trained guide(s) often required	Green (1993)	- historical origins = war and violence - virtues learned, rooted in power
- must prepare/train for experience	Henderson (1995)	- an adventure of the spirit
Adventure Tourism	Mitchell (1983)	- flow, ie. action and awareness become one
Butler & Waldbrook (1991); - the difference is based on physical discomfort	Nansen (1967)	- spirit of adventure, necessity for humanity
	Priest (1990)	- interpersonal/intrapersonal development
CTC (1995); - unusual, exotic, remote, wilderness setting - based on level of risk or physical exertion	Quinn (1990)	- peace is an outcome - self-knowledge is always an outcome - doubt is an essential element - the price of failure is loss
Mallet (1992);	Tarr (1968)	- survival skills, combat training required
- challenge of self, informational Sung, Morrison, and O'Leary (1997); - specific purpose of participation, explore new experience, often perceived risk or controlled danger associated with personal challenges, natural environment or exotic setting	Vester (1987)	- multidimensional: territoriality, duration, transcendence, risk, coping, and routinization
	Whitehead (1947)	- important for promotion/preservation of civilization
Tourism Canada (1993); - satisfaction from some unusual sight, activity, or accomplishment		
Walle (1997); - goal is to gain 'insight' or knowledge		
Plog (1991); - allocentrics and near-allocentrics		

A summary of the characteristics and elements of adventure based on the review of literature which compares the tourism literature with non-tourism, adventure literature.

important role. Mental risks pertain to the 'intrapersonal' aspect of the program and requires individuals to rely on their own capabilities and to push themselves to their limits. Social risks, on the other hand, concerns the 'interpersonal' nature of the experience and requires the individual to 'take a chance' at the risk of failing or looking silly, for example, and at the risk of what others may say or do.

Soft tourism may be differentiated from hard tourism on the basis of real risks. In a particular situation, however, perceptions of risk would vary according to the individual and their level of experience. What one participant considers high risk, another may consider low risk.

In the tourism industry, soft tourism is purported to have low levels of risk. However, individual participants, especially novices to an activity, may in fact perceive the risks to be very high. Participants may also be subject to high levels of mental and social risks. Thus, in a so-called low risk adventure, there could in fact be a presence of very high levels of risk. In order to better understand the nature of participants' adventure experience, it may be helpful to consider their risk perceptions relative to a particular adventure.

An additional issue concerns that of 'risk awareness'. In adventure pursuits, there is a 'deliberate seeking of risk', and individuals are aware of the risks that are involved in their activity and control them in a number of ways. With reference to adventure tourism, it is questionable whether participants deliberately seek risks. Many participants are usually not aware of the real risks. Risks are often 'hidden' in situations where adventure tourists simply may not have the experience and knowledge of the activity. Moreover, many participants often become aware of risks only after an incident occurs. This is evidenced in a recent article which documents numerous accidents and fatalities which have occurred in the whitewater rafting business in New Zealand (McLauchlan, 1995). For these participants, and until an incident or accident occurs, the adventure may be perceived as a low-risk activity, if not risk free.

Adventure education focuses on the elements of challenge, competence, and risk. Priest (1990b) asserts that challenge is the interplay between competence and risk. As previously noted, Mallet has included challenge in his description of adventure, although this is not discussed at any depth. Challenges in adventure tourism may be viewed primarily as physical. Challenges in adventure recreation and adventure pursuits, however, may include those of the mind in addition to the body. Therefore, research would assist in discovering if challenges of the mind do play a roll in adventure tourism. In addition, if participants believe that challenge is an important element of adventure tourism, or at least plays some sort of role in their adventure tourism experience, this potential discovery could also expand present notions of the adventure tourism experience.

Educational outcomes of adventure education programs include improved interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. These programs are typically 'facilitated' by someone who is knowledgable of the philosophy and pedagogy of adventure education. Granted that adventure tours do not usually possess a guide who necessarily facilitates such experiences per se, these tours, nonetheless, may improve interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. There are definite similarities between the aims of adventure education and those experiences which Bonington has reported. Bonington (1983) found that as a result of 'high' adventures, individuals did report that they learned about themselves. On the other hand, some adventurers improved their interpersonal skills while others' relationships with co-adventurers deteriorated with time. Research in adventure tourism could help determine to what degree interpersonal and intrapersonal skills are acquired as a result of an adventure tour, whether adventure tourists do learn about themselves, and whether the 'intensity' of these experiences are the same in soft adventure tourism.

Bonington (1983) also found that during their adventures individuals experienced an acute awareness of beauty and an attunement to their natural surroundings. These experiences were described as being extremely intense and fulfilling. Perhaps Bonington's adventurers were involved in peak or flow experiences as described by Maslow and Csikszentmihalyi, or perhaps they were experiencing peace as Quinn (1990) strongly suggests is a result of adventure. These 'high' or 'grand' adventures may be similar to hard adventures mentioned previously. In that case, an investigation into the nature of soft adventure could be illuminating in discovering whether or not participants engaging in soft adventure report experiences of, or relating to, awareness of beauty, attunement to surroundings, and peace. Studies into the nature of soft adventure could possibly reveal whether ‘soft adventurers’ are able to experience similar adventure experiences as interpreted by those involved in ‘hard’ adventures. It is also possible that such studies could reveal whether adventure is experienced differently between those tours distinguished as soft and hard tourism products.

The definitions of adventure travel that are put forth by Tourism Canada and the Canadian Tourism Commission are limited by their generality. 'Satisfaction' and 'accomplishment' are mentioned as elements of adventure tourism as well as 'unusual,' or 'wilderness destination(s)' and 'high or low levels of physical activity.' Yet there exist many more characteristics of adventure and many elements that make up an adventure experience. Table 1 clearly shows the breadth of perceptions held by various authors. What is lacking, however, is an attempt to understand, in depth, the experience of adventure, as it is perceived and experienced by adventure tourists themselves.

Thus far, the literature review has discussed the relationship between adventure (e.g., how it is used and conceptualized) and adventure tourism. The remainder of the literature review will discuss significant literature related to adventure and adventure tourism. The following section will also summarise those issues which have directed the researcher toward a naturalistic approach to the study of adventure tourism, which focuses on participants and their experiences.

Related Research

Leisure research in adventure has mostly focused on adventure recreation, adventure pursuits, and adventure education. Adventure research has also tended to focus on only one or a few select dimensions of adventure such as risk and engagement. The study of adventure has often been equated with risk recreation research and its various models.

In their article Testing the adventure model: Empirical support for a model of risk recreation participation, Ewert and Hollenhorst (1989) explicitly state that risk recreation is indeed a "search for risk and danger" and a "deliberate seeking of risk and danger." Risk recreation has led to the development of a model for risk taking behaviour which is explained in terms of eustressful and distressful experiences (Priest, 1993). In addition, Robinson (1992a) puts forth a descriptive model of enduring risk recreation involvement which attempts to aid in understanding the complexities of the risk experience.

The 'adventure model' has also been analysed according to levels of engagement and motivations (McIntyre, 1992). Similarly, the purpose of Schuett's (1993) study was to develop a more comprehensive method of measuring engagement. Researchers have also attempted to establish the relationship between individual and setting attributes of the adventure recreation experience (Ewert and Hollenhorst, 1994).

The concept of adventure has also been researched from an educational perspective. Priest (1992) portrays the dimensions of an adventure experience in terms of two constructs, perceived risk, and perceived competence. His study was concerned with perceptual changes in risk and competence of first and second-year university students who participated in a ropes course program. Kiewa (1994) proposes a "personal growth through adventure" model which integrates the most prominent features of three existing adventure models. The model focuses on self-control as a primary element in realizing participants' potentials.

Studies such as these have mostly used quantitative measures and have thus been rooted in a positivistic paradigm. However, Robinson (1992b) collected qualitative 'data' which he used to show how the benefits of risk recreation involvement are transferred to other areas of the lives of participants.

The above studies also reveal that respondents are often either students involved in a university program or recreationalists involved in non-tourism experiences. Very little research has been conducted within the area of adventure tourism which involve actual tourists. On one occasion, however, Peterson (1989) conducted focus groups of adventure tourists and asked them about adventure travel. She found that,

> The key element travellers see in adventure travel seems to be taking a risk, but they hasten to add not a life-threatening one! Most seem to feel that adventure travel involves physical risk. Vigorous effort, often in the wilderness, with little in the way of accommodations also contribute to adventure travel (Peterson, 1989, p. 95).

Research efforts such as the one Peterson describes are limited in number.

Mitchell's (1983) book, Mountain Experience: The Psychology and Sociology of Adventure, is a classic example of qualitative research into the nature of adventure. Mitchell, however, while focusing on mountain climbers, interprets his data almost exclusively in terms of flow experiences. In addition, his research does not consider tourists' perspectives. In Quest for Adventure, Bonington (1983) examines a variety of travel experiences, but utilizes descriptions of 'grand' adventures and not adventure tourism experiences, per se. Furthermore, there is no indication as to whether the 'data' had undergone the customary 'rigors' of traditional academic research.

Although these studies contribute to the understanding of adventure, their contribution is lacking in terms of empirical research into tourist experiences of adventure.

Summary

This author has attempted to outline an argument, based on existing literature, which shows that research into adventure tourism is lacking on many levels. The following is a summary of the issues:

1. Adventure research has mostly been concerned with particular 'central' aspects of adventure, such as risk. This may be considered to be a reductionist approach to the study of adventure.
2. For the most part, adventure has been studied from a positivistic paradigm, thus, from the researcher's perspective and within his/her own parameters. This has resulted in too little regard for participants' perspectives.
3. Researchers of adventure have rarely studied actual tourists involved in adventure tourism activities. It has been said that these people are best placed to describe their experiences in their own words.
4. Researchers have tended to conceptualize about adventure and provide theoretical models.
5. Adventure research has not been concerned with tourists' actual experiences. An area rarely studied, is an area of potential new and deeper understandings.

These issues have led the researcher to study adventure tourism from an interpretive paradigm, which is participant centred, and concerned with the holistic experiences of adventure tourists. Further reasons for proposing phenomenological research methods are elaborated within Chapter III.

CHAPTER III

PLANNING THE ROUTE

Hultsman and Anderson (1991) have pinpointed two prominent difficulties with the positivistic approach to studying leisure, namely, the 'parsimonious' and 'reductionist' nature of the paradigm. Part of the reason for these difficulties may be explained by the following:

> it may be felt that structured research imposes too much of the researcher's view on the situation, that it is not appropriate for the researcher to be the only one to decide which are the important issues and which questions are to be asked and to determine the whole framework within which the discourse of the research will be conducted. (Veal, 1992, p. 93)

Partly because of such beliefs, and because of the advantages which the interpretive paradigm (also referred to as naturalistic) (Henderson, 1991) has to offer, there has been an increase in the acceptance and use of qualitative research methods employed in the study of leisure (Jackson & Burton, 1989; Henderson, 1991).

While many scholars have examined particular leisure experiences, certain authors have identified a need to investigate 'tourist' experiences (e.g., Mannell & Iso-Ahola, 1987). Furthermore, many academics (e.g., Schmitz-Scherzer, 1990; Davis, 1996) advocate the use of phenomenology as an approach to studying leisure which result in deeper and richer understanding. Hence, from the perspective of the interpretive paradigm "people personally involved in a particular [leisure or tourism] situation are best placed to ... describe it in their words" (Veal, 1992, p. 93).

Epistemological Directions

As my research interest in adventure began to focus, I realized that I wanted to explore the nature of adventure in soft adventure tourism. I wanted people to tell me about *their* experiences. Moreover, I wanted to understand adventure from their perspective without the influence of my beliefs or biases. This research interest, I discovered, lent itself to a research design based on qualitative research methods, and the axioms of this research paradigm 'fit' best with my beliefs (Howe, 1991).

First, the most basic assumption of qualitative research is the existence of multiple realities (Henderson, 1991). Rather than accepting the positivist's belief that there exists a single reality 'out there' that is measurable and quantifiable (Creswell, 1994), I believe that each person experiences the world in personal and different ways. At the same time, qualitative researchers believe that individuals interpret the world in their own way. It has been noted that the phenomenon of adventure is subject to personal interpretation (e.g., Bonington, 1983; Ewert, 1989; Priest, 1990).

Second, the interpretive paradigm is based on an inductive approach to research. Whereas quantitative research, based on deductive reasoning, addresses social behaviour with *a priori* hypothesis testing strategies, qualitative research is discovery oriented and attempts to understand the same phenomenon from the actors' own perspectives (Henderson, 1991).

After considering such assumptions inherent in qualitative research and its congruency with my epistemology, I chose a phenomenological approach for this study. In phenomenology "the researcher seeks a deeper and fuller meaning of participants' experience of a particular phenomenon" (Morse & Field, 1995, p.151) through the establishment of "a renewed contact with original experience" (Van Manen, 1984, p. 37). The researcher attempts to "make sense of, or interpret, phenomenon in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p.2). These meanings have been associated with people's values, assumptions, and language (Bryman, 1988; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Howe, 1991).

Phenomenological Research

Phenomenology is the study of the essence of a particular experience which deeply interests its researcher(s). It is "the study of the lifeworld-the world as we immediately experience it rather than as we conceptualize, categorize or theorize about it" (Van Manen, 1984, p. 37). Its aim is to come to a fuller or deeper understanding of a certain 'lived' experience in order to uncover "what it is that renders this or that particular experience its special significance" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 32). Hence, phenomenological research often provides valuable insight into experiences which are often overlooked or taken for granted.

It is important to note that "there is no such thing as THE phenomenological method. Instead, the phenomenologist employs descriptive methods, with emphasis on the plural" (Colaizzi, 1978, p. 53). Although not exhaustive, the following review of a sample of the literature reveals the dynamic nature of phenomenological methods and accepted practices. First, the number of subjects are sometimes limited. In her study Friendship between women: A phenomenological study of best friends, Becker's (1987) subjects included only two sets of women friends and each subject was interviewed separately for a total of eight to ten hours over a four month period. Second, participants may come from various cultural backgrounds and single interviews from each participant may suffice. Ablamowicz (1992) questioned eight doctoral students during her phenomenological study into the experience of 'shame' (four of whom were from different continents) and single interviews only lasted up to one hour for each person. Third, more than one descriptive 'protocol' (a description of the experience written by the participant) may be solicited from any particular participant and the investigator/author may present his/her own descriptive composition. For example, in a phenomenological study of 'shyness' (Guglietti-Kelly and Westcott, 1990), one of the authors used their own descriptive protocol, four protocols were used from a second informant, and a third informant provided the final written description. Fourth, descriptions from interviews may be combined with descriptive protocols. In a part of his study on youth tourism, Schonhammer (1992) combined descriptions from interviews with compositions from people who were asked to write about "Encounters with people from foreign nations and cultures: personal experiences."

In addition, the research process is somewhat uncertain as methods may need to be altered, or in some cases, completely changed. Such is the nature of inductive research. Therefore, "a certain openness is required in human science research that allows for choosing directions and exploring techniques, procedures and sources that are not always foreseeable at the outset of a research project" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 162).

Finally, one must keep in mind that phenomenological research of any experience is never complete and that different researchers will obtain different results. As Van Manen (1984) confirms, "a phenomenological description is always one interpretation, and no single interpretation of human experience will ever exhaust the possibility of yet another complementary, or even potentially richer, description" (p. 40).

Basic Propositions of Phenomenology

One of the most prominent figures in the philosophical development of phenomenology was the mathematician, Husserl, who believed that none of the 'rigorous sciences' could adequately help us to understand our experiences of the world. The following discussion, which is taken from Husserl's original work, provides the philosophical underpinnings of this research.

To begin, Shutz (1966) explains the proposition of 'intentionality' which refers to the relationship between, for example, our thought and thought *of*, our fear and fear *of*. This intentionality clearly distinguishes between such things as our thoughts and fears and the objects of our thoughts and fears. In other words, phenomenologists discriminate between the act of thinking, or fearing, and thinking which is *directed toward* a certain thing, or fear *of* a particular thing.

Phenomenologists, in arresting their belief in the outer world's existence abstain from all prejudgement of the outer world. This procedure is called 'putting the world in brackets' (bracketing) or 'performing the phenomenological reduction' (Shutz, 1966). Thus, a phenomenologist brackets the world, his beliefs, knowledge and practices of science, and him/herself as a 'psych-physiological unit'. What remains is "nothing less than the universe of our conscious life, the stream of thought in its integrity, with all its activities and with all its cogitations and experiences ... which includes not only perceptions, judgements, but also acts of will, feelings, dreams, fantasies, etc." (Shutz, 1966, p.29).

In this manner, the intentional nature of our thoughts are basically thoughts *of* a certain thing which are referred to as intentional objects. Further, the intentional object of my perception, "the chair as I *have perceived* it," or the *phenomenon* "chair *as it appears to me,*" may differ from that which exists in the bracketed outer world (Shutz, 1966). Our thoughts and perceptions are influenced by other cogitations of our mind and are interconnected to other streams of thought, to present events, to past recollections, as well as to future anticipations. Thus, phenomenology is involved with objects perceived and imagined, and phenomenologists are interested in their *meaning*, as "constituted by the activities of our mind" (Shutz, 1966, p.37).

Explicating Preconceptions

It is important to note that the researcher's presuppositions and foreunderstandings of the nature of the study include his life's experiences as well as those concepts, experiences, and theories discussed in the literature review. These presuppositions and foreunderstandings, along with the following preconceptions, were bracketed during the research process.

- An adventure experience can have a positive and profound effect on its participants and can lead to new-growth experiences.
- Individuals experience adventure in very different ways.

- Adventure may be experienced in a manner free of risk.
- Through thoughtful reflection, an individual may come to realize the valuable contribution an adventure can have to one's life and one's outlook on life.
- The proposed research may expand participants' understanding of what adventure means to them.
- The age of participants, as it pertains to their stage in life, may affect their perceptions of adventure.

Selection of Participants

Since the purpose of the study was to investigate the essence of adventure in soft adventure tourism, I selected 'informants' who had participated in soft adventure tours which were marketed as adventure products. Because the study required the participation of actual tourists, a number of logistical considerations had to be addressed during the course of the study.

In order to solicit appropriate responses from co-researchers it is beneficial to initially approach potential candidates with a clear indication as to what it is the researcher wants them to talk and/or write about. At first, it may appear that the researcher is asking only what they want to hear. Further scrutiny, however, reveals that this initial contact is meant to 'set up' the study and to steer participants into the proper frame of mind in order to successfully isolate the sought-after experiences.

For example, in "The experience of transition to meaning and purpose in life" Denne and Thompson (1991) recruited only those volunteers who "believed they had experienced 'a transition from a prolonged state of despair at the meaninglessness and purposelessness of life to a prolonged state of strong, clear, and satisfying meaning and purpose in life'" (p. 115). Similarly, as part of the development of the 'peak-experience' theory, Maslow (1962) solicited both verbal and written responses to the following explicit instructions:

> I would like you to think of the most wonderful experience or experiences of your life; happiest moments, ecstatic moments, moments of rapture, perhaps from being in love, or from listening to music or suddenly 'being hit' by a book or a painting, or from some great creative moment. First list these. And then try to tell me how you feel in such acute moments, how you feel differently from the way you feel at other times, how you are at the moment a different person in some ways. (With other subjects the questioning asked rather about the ways in which the world looked different.). (Maslow, 1962, p. 67)

In a similar fashion, willing participants of the proposed study were selected on the basis that: (1) they believed they had experienced adventure during an adventure tour such as dog sledding or back country skiing, and (2) they were willing to provide either a verbal or written description of their experience. Potential informants who did not believe that their tour was an adventure were not considered for further participation in the study.

Initially, I attempted to solicit the cooperation of twelve tour operators in western Canada who offer soft adventure products. A letter was sent to each of the individual operators which explained the nature of the study and requested their assistance. None of the tour operators responded to the letter. I then telephoned six of the tour operators with the intention of establishing some kind of rapport and acquiring access to any number of their clients in a manner which they deemed appropriate. Four of the six operators either promised to provide a short list of a few key participants, or forward copies of the initial letter to those clients who they thought would respond positively to the study. Despite these intentions, I failed to hear from any of the tour operators or their clients through this particular strategy.

The next strategy involved a number of different approaches aimed at acquiring willing participants for the study. Advertisements were submitted in a city-wide entertainment magazine (for two consecutive weeks), in the Edmonton Journal (for one Friday and Saturday only), and in the University of Alberta's student newspaper (in two issues). A special advertisement was also sent on two occasions via electronic mail to all University of Alberta graduate students who had access to the university's computer network services. In addition, numerous copies of a one page advertisement were posted on billboards throughout the University of Alberta, in select locations at the University of Calgary and at a small number of sports and outdoor retail outlets in the city of Edmonton. On two occasions, the Internet discussion list *Leisurenet* proved to be a useful avenue through which I described my study and attempted to solicit willing and appropriate participants from around the world. Furthermore, a search on the World Wide Web resulted in a connection to a web site which provided the opportunity to contact clients of a particular adventure tour (who had given prior consent to the tour operator) and were willing to talk about their experiences. Lastly, I used the 'word-of-mouth' method at every opportunity that I could.

When it became apparent that I might not be able to attract an adequate number of co-researchers from any single type of soft adventure tourism product I expanded the selection of adventure tours. As a result, participants of the study were selected on the bases of having been involved in at least one (and in one participant's case, two) of the following: dog sledding, back country skiing, and horse/trail riding adventure tourism experiences. Altogether, six people provided descriptive accounts of their horse/trail riding adventures (of these six people, five were involved in two face-to-face interviews, while one participant communicated via electronic mail on three separate occasions), four people were interviewed twice concerning their back country ski adventures, and another two sets of interviews took place with individuals who had been dog sledding. In addition, one person provided a protocol via electronic mail, while a further three participants offered descriptive protocols of their dog sled experiences. In total, fifteen individuals participated in the study which resulted in sixteen 'sets' of descriptive data (one co-researcher provided two separate descriptive accounts based on two types of adventure tourism products). Altogether, the qualitative data are based on six horse/trail riding experiences, four back country ski experiences, and six dog sledding experiences.

Data Collection Methods

Sources of phenomenological 'data' may take many forms. For example, Colaizzi (1978) lists written descriptions, 'dialogal' interviews, and observation of lived-events among possible sources of data, as well as what he calls, 'imaginative presence'. Van Manen (1990) adds to the list and includes such data as etymological sources, idiomatic phrases, experiential descriptions in literature, biographies, and art, in addition to existing phenomenological literature.

Phenomenological research may draw on one type of data source, or it may incorporate a number of data collection methods. The number of subjects can vary from a few to a few hundred informants. The nature of the research data depends on such factors as the size and time-frame of the study, access to informants, availability of potential informants, the quality or depth of data from any single source, as well as the physical nature of the research site and other logistics.

The first method of data collection which I employed was in depth interviewing. Rather than conducting structured interviews, the semi-structured open format which centres on the interviewee was decidedly the best option in order to solicit the experiences of informants. The disadvantage of structured interviews is that the researcher decides what questions to ask. The interviewee then answers according to specific questions and is thereby immediately limited by them. The semi-structured format provided the interviewee with more freedom or 'latitude' (Bryman, 1988) to express him/herself. Without the researcher-biased directions or influences, co-researchers were then able to relate their experiences 'in their own words' and 'as they experienced adventure'. The interview schedule (Appendix A) acted as a guideline in this respect.

Two interviews were conducted with each interviewee. The interviews were taped with prior written consent of the participant and lasted for twenty to sixty minutes. During the first interview, all co-researchers were asked what it was that was adventurous about their experience. They were then asked to tell about a certain incident or a particular moment that was adventurous and to describe the experience in as much detail as possible. Where situational factors permitted, co-researchers were asked to describe a second or third incident.

Afterward, the first interview was transcribed and an analysis of the data was conducted. At that time, noticeable 'gaps' in the data were recognised which directed the researcher to areas or points which needed further 'investigating' during the second interview. It was necessary to ask the informant to expand on certain aspects of their adventure which, in the initial interview, was only briefly mentioned. The second interview also provided an occasion for the interviewee to inspect the transcript for accuracy and to clarify areas of ambiguity. The aim of the second interview was for the co-researcher to further illuminate particular incidents in a more descriptive manner which resulted in an overall 'thick description' that includes a "thorough recounting of the phenomenon under study" (Howe, 1991, p.52).

The second major source of data was solicited in the form of 'protocols' which encouraged willing informants to write about a personal experience (Colaizzi, 1978). The protocol instructions (Appendix B) were hand delivered, mailed, or electronically mailed to potential participants of the study. The phenomenological research questions attempted to "tap the subjects' experiences of the phenomenon as distinct from their theoretical knowledge of it" (Colaizzi, 1978, p. 58).

In addition to protocols and interviews, 'fieldnotes' were taken on an ongoing basis. Fieldnotes can describe, for example, particular significant events which cannot be captured on audiotape, such as a co-researcher's physical gestures or certain feelings or impressions that one experiences during an interview. Bogdan and Bilken (1992) also emphasize that

> fieldnotes can provide any study with a personal log that helps the researcher to keep track of the development of the project, to visualize how the research plan has been affected by the data collected, and to remain self-conscious of how he or she has been influenced by the data. (p. 107)

A further source of data must be mentioned. One participant provided written text concerning the significant experiences which he referred to during the interviews. These sources of information (in the form of two magazine article submissions, a Ph.D. dissertation chapter, and a book chapter) were considered appropriate and valid data and were included in the study. Once all of the data were collected from the various sources, the interviews and protocols were analysed according to emergent themes.

Thematic Analysis

When conducting a thematic analysis of the data, one must keep in mind that "phenomenological themes are not objects or generalizations," but "fasteners, foci, or threads around which the phenomenological description is facilitated" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 90-91). With this in mind, the following seven-step process, as outlined by Colaizzi (1978), was followed as closely as possible:

1. Read all of the subject's descriptions in order to get a 'feel' for and make sense out of them.
2. Extract phrases and sentences that directly pertain to the phenomenon in question.
3. Formulate meanings from each significant statement.

4. Repeat steps 1 to 3 for each protocol. Aggregate the formulated meanings and arrange into clusters of themes.
   a) Validate these clusters of themes by referring back to the original protocols.
   b) Be aware of discrepancies among and/or between the various clusters and act accordingly.
5. Integrate the results of everything, thus far, into a thorough description of the investigated topic.
6. As much as possible, the researcher should provide a thorough description which is true to the fundamental nature of the investigated phenomenon.
7. Return to the research subjects in order to validate the findings.

Theme Development

The development of themes and the process of writing a phenomenological description of the experience of adventure was based on methods and procedures as discussed and exemplified in Colaizzi (1978), Becker (1992), and Karlsson (1993). In addition, I followed Wertz's (1984) approach to attending to the data which consists of five movements: "empathic presence to the described situation; slowing down and patiently dwelling; magnification and amplification of details; turning from objects to immanent meanings; and suspending belief and employing intense interest" (as cited in Becker, 1992, p. 45). Based on these methods, procedures, and movements, I approached the process of theme development, analysis of data, and the writing of the phenomenon through the following procedure:

1. Read through the transcripts.
2. Study each interviewee's life-world description and make notes regarding potential themes and 'meaning units' (Karlsson, 1993), "meaning which imbues facts" (p. 97). This involves "trac[ing] out the implicit and explicit ... meaning that the subject has lived through and described" (Karlsson, 1993, p. 97). Write these themes and meaning units in the wide margin which was left for this purpose.
3. Put oneself within the co-researcher's experience. This has also been referred to as "imaginative presence" (Colaizzi, 1978, p. 62).

4. Maintain sensitivity to what co-researchers were experiencing, through "imaginative variation" (Karlsson, 1993), which is an attempt to discover underlying meanings which are derived from facts.
5. While reading through the descriptions ask "What is happening in this situation?" "What is most prominent aspect of the experience?" "How are these themes linked together?"
6. When themes are firmly established, place all relative data in separate files pertaining to each particular theme (with appropriate coding), through electronic cutting and pasting. Where and when appropriate, place data from an individual in a separate file.
7. Begin to write a phenomenological description of the adventure experience.
8. Continually revisited each of the above steps.

As a result of this process, the following sixteen themes were identified in the study: the imaginative experience; hesitation and doubt; fear; novelty; freedom; exploration; challenge; the unexpected; personal risk; remoteness; experiencing nature; the learning experience; the social experience; the comparative experience; transformation: JP's adventure experience; and living history (being *with* another time and place): Rob's adventure experience.

The Issue of Rigor

In qualitative research, rigor is required in order to provide protection from 'error' and to develop trustworthiness (Morse and Field, 1995). The four aspects of trustworthiness provided by Lincoln and Guba (1985) are truth value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality (as cited in Morse and Field, 1995).

Truth value, or 'credibility' (Morse and Field, 1995), was achieved through careful and accurate reporting of participants' experiences, by letting the data speak for itself, and by following Colaizzi's (1978) process of thematic analysis. In terms of applicability, the aim of this study is not to apply the findings to other settings or groups.

Instead, the reader is left with the final interpretation. Further, Van Manen (1984) believes that since phenomenology expresses its topic as a 'possible human experience,' phenomenological descriptions are 'universal' and 'intersubjective' by nature. The issue of consistency does not apply to this qualitative study. Because of the uniqueness of each interview situation which involve unique individuals, it is expected that findings be different under any other conditions which by their very nature cannot be exactly replicable. Neutrality, or confirmability, is achieved through prolonged contact with informants in some fashion. In this study a second interview was conducted with each interviewed informant, and where necessary, others were contacted three or four times via electronic mail on the Internet. The act of bracketing throughout the course of the research project also ensured neutrality. This was further advanced by consulting other colleagues during the analysis of textual data and the establishment of appropriate themes.

Ethical Considerations

Participants of the study signed an informed consent form prior to the beginning of the study in order to (1) be interviewed and recorded (see Appendix C), or (2) provide a written description (protocol) of their experience (see Appendix D). They were informed that there would not be any health risks involved in the study and that their involvement in the study would remain anonymous. Participants of the study were also made aware that they could withdraw their consent and terminate their participation at any time without penalty. They were also informed that all tapes, transcripts, and protocols would be safeguarded and would remain confidential at all times. Informants of the study were given the opportunity to ask any questions before signing the consent form and prior to participating in the study.

The Written Research Text

The result of phenomenological research, the written text, can appear in many styles. For example, Van Manen (1984) advocates "phenomenological inquiry is not unlike an artistic endeavour, a creative attempt to somehow capture a certain phenomenon of life in a linguistic description that is both powerful and eloquent" (p.43). Therefore, he explains, phenomenology is a 'poetizing' process where research and writing become one (Van Manen, 1990). Examples of this kind of phenomenological writing is apparent throughout the journal Phenomenology & Pedagogy.

By comparison, the Journal of Phenomenological Psychology exhibits writing which is less poetic, and perhaps, more analytical. As a case in point, editors of the psychology journal publish articles which virtually list resulting themes (e.g., Guglietti-Kelly and Westcott, 1990), while editors of Phenomenology & Pedagogy would find this inappropriate for their particular journal style.

The final text is also a reflection of the data. For example, because Duenkel (1994) was able to interview six co-researchers in depth, she relates the experiences of each person on an individual basis. Along with a verbal description, she provides a tabular representation of the thematic analysis for each co-researcher's experience. In a subsequent chapter, aggregate data is then used to describe the co-researchers' 'common' experience.

In other studies, where written descriptions have been acquired from a number of people, it is inappropriate to interpret each one separately. Instead, the researcher treats these protocols as 'aggregate' data to eventually formulate an exhaustive description of the phenomenon under investigation. In some studies protocols are also aggregated with interview data in order to produce the final interpretation (e.g., Schonhammer, 1992).

Fischer and Wertz (1979) illustrate a number of ways in which phenomenological research is presented and exhibit five basic forms which they call case synopses, illustrated narrative, general condensation, exemplar case synopses, and general psychological structure. Furthermore, it is not uncommon to utilize more than one 'level' of presentation (Becker, 1992). For purposes of this research the findings followed the general condensation form and highlighted key descriptions using case synopses.

The Study's Contribution

The researcher sought to contribute to the fields of leisure, recreation, and tourism in the following ways:

- The research attempted to reach a deeper understanding of adventure in soft adventure tourism.
- After establishing the biases of the researcher and the cultural context of the study, the reader may recognize (connect with) certain aspects of the research and can decide for themselves whether or not and how to'use' the knowledge.
- The researcher intended the study to aid tour operator(s) in understanding that adventure experiences can have a great impact on participants.
- Tour operator(s) may better understand the experiences of certain clientele.

- The research study may direct participants toward a deeper personal understanding of adventure.

- The researcher attempted to create interest and discussion among academics and practitioners in the tourism industry, concerning the nature of adventure with an emphasis on its role in tourism.

CHAPTER IV

THE EXPERIENCE OF ADVENTURE

Introduction

When we drove into Fort Smith, we noticed a sign that advertised dog sledding. Wow! What could be a better way to experience the N.W.T. in February? None of us had even considered dog sledding as a possible activity, but we were very excited at the idea. We headed over to the operator's house at around 7 pm. We walked around the pens where the dogs are kept while the operator set up the sled and hooked up the dogs. The sled was pulled by 12 Alaskan Huskies at one time. That's a lot of power! The dogs barked like crazy, they just want to run. The sled had to be tied to the truck while we got organized and climbed in to prevent the dogs from taking off before we were ready to go. They just pull and pull and pull.

When it was my turn, I climbed into the sled first. The sled was very comfortable, lined with hides, and wool blankets. We were off. The first thing I noticed was the complete silence. I had this idea that dog sledding would be noisier. The only sound was the sound of the dogs and the sleigh on the snow, and the occasional German command from the operator. I also noticed the speed at which we were travelling. We were going much faster than I had ever anticipated. As we slid across the snow through the forest, the huge spruce trees on either side of the trail blocked out all but a sliver of moonlight. It felt warmer in the forest, and very peaceful. I remember closing my eyes and thinking about all the people who have travelled so many miles across the arctic this same way. I envied those people.

As we came out of the forest the Northern Lights were dancing and crackling across the sky. The moon was very full as well, and gave off a lot of light. It was a cold night, below minus 30, and the air was very crisp. I could feel the frost building up on my eyelashes! As we continued along the clearing, I remember feeling so very relaxed and content, but at the same time I was so excited and so happy. I was dog sledding! Never did I expect to do this! How lucky! We went down a very steep hill, and around a corner, over a narrow little bridge, the sled tilted to one side because the corner was so sharp, and then we were back on both skis, and up the hill. Around another corner, it was time to head back. This meant that it was my turn to "mush", and stand on the sled. This was more challenging and not as relaxing as sitting in the sled. I had to brake when going around corners to prevent the sled from tipping over, and also when going downhill so that the racing sled wouldn't hit the

> sitting sled. On the way home the Northern Lights were beginning to fade. I thought about how lucky I was to be experiencing this adventure, about how this was exactly the right way to spend my time in the N.W.T. The trip back seemed so fast. As we neared the house, the silence was broken. The dogs in the yard began to bark, and the others were cheering for us as we came through the trees ...
>
> Paulette, 1997

The above account, which was written by a participant of the study, is an example of the type of adventure experiences that co-researchers described. But what is it about Paulette's experience that made it particularly adventurous? What are the essential characteristics of her adventure? Is it the fact that she had entered into an unexpected and unique situation? Is it the challenge of driving the dog team? Or is the essence of her adventure more complex? What can these types of experiences reveal about the nature of adventure? And how can these tourist experiences add to our present understanding of adventure?

The purpose of this chapter is to present an in depth phenomenological description of adventure as experienced by tourists. The description is based on interview transcripts and protocols of fifteen co-researchers who had participated in back country skiing, horse/trail riding, and/or dog sledding tourism experiences. It is my intention that the reader may gain insight into the nature of adventure as was revealed through the variety of experiences of adventure tourists.

The Imaginative Experience

A characteristic of adventure, which is often experienced, is that it inevitably begins in the mind. Thoughts and expectations of the adventure precede the on-site experience. It is a time of daydreaming, as one person recounts, "I was filled with thoughts of riding through beautiful countryside, exploring areas that only my imagination could explore and having to deal with incidents and events as they presented themselves to me." Within this 'dimension' one transcends socially constructed time and physical space and is able to "go in any direction that I wished at any time," and therefore beyond 'established trails'. Indeed, the imaginative adventure is without boundaries. It is characterised by unrestrained actions and the freedom to do what one desires. In this sense, it is an 'active' anticipation.

The imaginative adventure can also be experienced while on an actual tour as one woman illustrates,

> ... I spotted a short ridge and my urge was to tie my horse up and amble down it and explore for a little while. It looked very interesting and had some thicker bush to one side and more open areas spotted throughout. The adventure bug got me again. I sussed out the whole ridge and felt competent enough to find a way out to the end that would have afforded some great views.

In spite of her 'hopeful expectations' the woman wasn't able to carry out her desires because of the demands of the trip guide/leader, so her imaginings remained, however briefly, active only in her mind.

Hesitation and Doubt

Hesitation and doubt are both part of the adventure experience. Some people become apprehensive about whether they should partake in the adventure experience at all because they convince themselves "that perhaps some other people might think that you are foolish for trying to attempt something of that nature." Others doubt their ability to do the actual activity as they repeatedly ask themselves "can I do it?" and eventually, "do I want to do it? why do I want to do it?" They begin to have serious doubts about whether they could meet the new physical demands which would be placed on them as they engage in an activity foreign to any previous experience. As one woman noted, driving from point A to point B is an every day occurrence, whereas her adventure "was new, it was untried, it was different. It was exposing [my] self to something that was unknown to me up to that point."

Reservations about participating also surface during the actual trip itself. One person recollects thinking at the time, "Did I really want to be here? Did I really like this?" Prior to, and during actual participation, thoughts of "Pain. I might get hurt. I might die." run through one's mind "that send up all the red flags." Such thoughts often lead to fear.

Fear

For one participant, a sense of fear derives from his feelings of being underskilled. As one man explains, "I had this fear that I wasn't going to be good enough even - at high enough level to benefit from these lessons that they were teaching ... and so I thought maybe I wouldn't be good enough to do a helicopter trip like this." An underlying element in this case, is the fear of being judged by other trip participants and/or burdening the group as a whole by slowing them down.

Fear also stems from the sudden realization of what 'being out there' actually means. A helicopter trip into mountainous back country generates a fear of the remoteness which one may experience during such a trip. "I'm so far away. If I get hurt what will happen? It'll take a while to get out of here."

For others, it is the *potential* of injury and bodily harm that creates their fear. The following is a typical illustration of this:

> It was a bad storm day. I was near the end of the row with another guy who was quite a good skier and we sort of left the pack and somehow skied down through trees as opposed to going through an opening. So it meant having to manoeuvre even more effectively than I had before, or hitting a tree ... I was skiing in a forest! It was a very real risk, then. I knew intellectually that there was a fear, but I was also very nervous that it could be realized.

Whatever the fear may be, it is in essence, a personal response toward a particular situation. Fear is an expression of a person's thoughts about some future event, and as long as the future remains unsure for them, fear may surely develop in situations of novelty.

Novelty

> "...and so all of this was just like new, new, new, new, new."

> "It was so completely different, so foreign to me. Like something that I had never experienced."

> "It was quite remote as opposed to anything else I've done before."

For many, novelty in and of itself generates an adventure experience. Novelty, for example, of place, activity, and people are used as points of reference with which past experiences are compared. "I had never been there before, I had never accessed back country skiing by helicopter before. I didn't know anybody else who was going to be there." Entering into a new situation or environment can produce "a different comfort level." 'Newness' brings about uncertainty of conditions ("we didn't really know what the horses were going to be like, what the riding was going to be like") and uncertainty of whether or not expectations would be met. Novelty sometimes leads to anxiety or even fear, since, as one woman remarked, "my body of knowledge about that at that point was very small, and so I had no reference, nothing to reference that against."

In addition, participating in a new type of activity provides a unique opportunity that may otherwise be unobtainable. "To go back and ski where no one else had been before and having to break the trail ... I wouldn't have done something like that on my own." To take up the attitude, "Just for fun, just for something different," is to try something new, to chance something out of the ordinary, and to go beyond usual ventures.

To be 'open' to new experiences is to embrace novelty, and this openness to go beyond what one is usually comfortable with is exemplified in the following story of trust:

> Mark took me up on a little spiny ridge that dropped off maybe forty-five or fifty degrees on one side and it dropped off maybe sixty or seventy degrees almost straight down, on the other side. And the trail was extremely narrow ... I'm nervous about heights. In fact, I freeze if the height gets real bad ... but Mark said that it was safe and the horse was safe and so ... I decided I'd just let the horse do it and in one place the horse has to sort of jump down and it scared the shit out of me. But the view was magnificent and I was really pleased to have done it. And I

had trusted the horse and I trusted Mark.

Adopting a 'new' mode of transportation, for example, opens a multitude of doors. The variation in travel can affect the type and variety of stimuli, and the rate at which these stimuli are experienced. As one co-researcher illustrated,

> And on horseback you can get a lot farther than hiking ... you'd actually cover more territory, more ground ... a wider variety of areas to ride through. Like we could ride along the river, through the river, in the trees ... a lot more variety of different things to see.

Finally, after a 'successful' novel adventure there remains a strong pull toward subsequent new ventures as one woman voiced, "it just made it easier for me to approach the next kind of thing like that with less trepidation. That 'I did that. I can do something else.'"

In what may seem to be contradictory to the search-for-novelty attitude another participant noted,

> often there are new areas that you go to so there's the joy of discovery, but there's also coming back to places that you've been to and you say, 'yeah, Jack-knife pass, that was really beautiful. I really like being there and it's nice to go back and see it and feel it again'... and enjoy the same sort of thing ... to re-experience places that you've enjoyed.

There is an attempt to re-visit places in order to 're-create' certain experiences "because I liked it and I expect to like it again." It has been argued, however, that no two experiences can be exactly the same (the place may have changed slightly, and I am different today compared to yesterday). While it is possible to revisit a place, is it actually possible to re-create a past experience? If not, then perhaps revisitations become a means to further explore 'place' and 'self'.

Freedom

Exploration of place and self was a manifestation of the freedom that a certain co-researcher experienced. Freedom lay at the heart of Jeannette's adventure. With a few close friends, Jeannette embarked on a horseback riding trip for the first time within the Rocky Mountains. Upon renting horses from an outfitter (from whom one friend had previously rented) the group was allowed to go without a guide. "We were basically on our own." As Jeannette explains their situation, "We didn't have a set path that we had to go on. We could go any direction that we chose and just basically explore any part of the mountains on horseback that we wanted."

Compared to riding with a guide and on horses which usually follow nose to tail on preset well-worn trails, Jeannette felt totally unrestricted and free. She felt that she was able to express her freedom, as could the group. Since they hadn't had any specific plans or agenda, (aside from generally enjoying their day) they began to follow their whims. "We started off being very easy and just going wherever, and just going wherever the wind blew." What developed was a 'come-what-may' attitude as a loose plan developed and a general direction was temporarily decided "by virtue of the [trails] we had chosen as we went along."

The lack of a guide, and the freedom that resulted, invoked a sense of autonomy among the members of the group. According to Jeannette they were able to make their own choices as situations arose - when to run the horses, ride side-by-side, or stop to explore an area. In addition, it was easy to make a change in plans. "As we were going along we noticed that it was going to be a fairly wide, long loop, so we eventually [decided] to turn back and come the same way we had left."

The freedom that Jeannette experienced, in turn, produced a climate of exploration. With "more to explore" the feeling that 'you never know what will happen' and 'what will come up next' was ever present. Jeannette felt that there were "more unknowns" than usual. In this manner, it can be said that the unexpected nature of the adventure experience has the ability to continually spawn unexpected circumstances.

Exploration

As one co-researcher suggested, exploration "comes close to a spirit of adventure." For him, seeing a new place which is "virtually untouched" (where not many people had ever been) and where he would be alone, encapsulated the adventure experience. For others, it was the fact that they *themselves* had never been to a certain place. It is important for them to see a place with 'their own eyes'. Exploration also conjures images of rambling through new areas as one man describes,

> ... the canyons in Willmore. They're very beautiful, the basins. They're high, usually not much in the way of trees. Beautiful alpine meadows and high rocky alpine ridges surrounding them. And it's a visual treat and the sense of roaming through them is nice.

Even after visiting a place a number of times, another co-researcher affirms "I have a curiosity about parts of it that I haven't seen." It is the sense of exploration that also urges individuals to forgo usual preferences and practices in order to satiate their curiosity.

The sense of exploration is closely connected to novelty, and perhaps in the form of a partnership. While novelty may be seen as a place or thing yet to be experienced (and therefore acts as an attraction), to explore is to take action *toward* the discovery of new experiences (the novel element). Thus, novelty becomes the object toward which explorations are directed. And just as the sense of novelty continually pulls one toward new ventures, the sense of exploration is also cyclical.

If seeing is believing, then the experience of seeing something first hand makes one yearn for further explorations into unknown territory. This curiosity to explore feeds on itself. It compels one to return to an area, or to explore a new area altogether. This 'spirit of adventure' may be at the very heart of adventure. One may even be compelled to explore a new experience through a completely new type of activity or challenge.

Challenge

The daily and often very demanding activities that participants become involved in are undoubtedly a physical challenge. Thoughts of "we had to ski *all* the way out" and "It was quite long ... quite a distance" typify reactions and feelings to the physical nature of an adventure. On the other hand, a challenge may also become a mental activity. As one woman declared, "... you have to be really alert because you could have harmed yourself ... because there were cliffs ... you just always have to be thinking about what's going to happen next." Challenge can also present itself in terms of skill development. "The challenge of how well the horse goes over with you staying on top." Unexpected challenges can also develop. The following depicts an event where the participant faced the unexpected task of first planning, and then carrying out a successful rescue operation:

> We had to go after two people who hadn't shown up where they should have been and I knew where they were supposed to be coming down so I needed to go along

> with the outfitters to do the search. And they did have flares and so it was dark and we should have been seeing the flares and so obviously they had gone the wrong way from where I had left them. They had taken off on their own individual hike and so we had to try to psych-out which way they might have gone and where we would send the rescue crews with horses to try and find them so they wouldn't have to spend the night out over night.

In yet another scenario, danger and risk lead to a personal challenge. While dog sledding, one participant was alerted to the dangers of the brutal cold. "No matter how you dress, no matter what you do, it's very easy to get very cold very quickly and you're face gets wind burned as well." As a result of a previous experience, she "was in so much pain afterward because of the cold." Consequently, she was quite aware of the risk of frostbite to face, feet, or hands, and attempted to make the necessary preparations. While on the trail, however, she was "puzzled." She explains, "if you're sitting down you're cold and if you're standing up then your face is burning." How does the guide do it? Her challenge developed into "trying to drive the sled at the same time as not getting frost bite." In other words, her challenge was to learn (on her own) how the guide continued to operate his dog team and sled without concern for the cold, while keeping warm. She was attempting to 'unlock the key' to what, for her, was a trade secret.

The Unexpected

'The unexpected' plays a key role in adventure since it is unknown territory for the adventurer. The unexpected nature of an experience has the element of surprise, of not knowing what the outcome will be. A rendezvous with the unexpected, therefore, has the potential to lead to unique and unforeseeable opportunities. As one woman remarked about her experience, "I never expected to have that sort of opportunity ... I never thought that you could go on something like this and have an opportunity to actually drive the team."

In a situation of extremely bad weather, one gentleman finally evacuated a remote area after being forced to stay beyond what was originally planned. The incident forced the participant into a position where he had to rely on the guide and his mode of transportation (his horse). The situation eventually lead him toward an unexpected appreciation:

> ... we were caught in for three and a half extra days. We couldn't get out because the rivers were too flooded .... [Eventually] we got on horses and we went out on a route that was very untried. It's not got horse trails through it so we went cross country on horses. And because I haven't ridden much, I don't have a good feel for what horse can do compared to me on foot. The outfitters say they're more stable even on very narrow paths where there are steep falls and so on, but you don't believe that instinctively if you haven't been on horses a lot. So you kind of take that as an act of faith ... Well the nice thing about that is I saw some country I haven't seen before and we had a very long day on horseback and it was kind of neat because these big beasts were carrying us up ravines and across creeks ... it was a man-animal interaction kind of thing. I think it's probably why people ride, like to ride a lot. It gave me a feel for that ... And it was a powerful experience!

Even for the mature and experienced traveller, it is possible to be put in a situation otherwise inconceivable and therefore highly unimaginable in terms of the outcomes. A participant describes a unique experience with nature which occurred during a rescue operation:

> When I went on the rescue on the last trip ... I got on a horse and it was pitch black. And I couldn't see the trail at all and the outfitter assured me that the horses *could* see. And we were going up and down, it was like floating in the air with a starlit sky, with shooting stars going over and so on. And you could barely see ... I wouldn't normally ... hop on a horse and say let's go have a midnight-in-the-dark horse riding adventure. But having done it I might.

The unpredictable circumstances which result from participant encounters with new experiences, can be considered the impacts of novelty. These impacts can be fearful for participants who meet circumstances where there is a presence of personal risk.

Personal Risk

It is common for some people to readily describe adventurous incidents which are dangerous or pose some degree of personal risk. The following accounts typify risk situations that participants encountered which include: the potential for injury, being lost, and actual personal injury. The first adventure experience occurred during a woman's back country skiing trip and is based on her fears of what she thought *might* happen:

> ... I can remember, the one day we did the one ascent ... the snow was fairly stable but not bomb proof. There was still some uncertainty about it. And after we finished the ascent, when we were skiing down, the fellow who runs the lodge and the operation was telling us that we had to go in steps and we couldn't all go at the same time because he wasn't totally confident about the slope stability. And, so of course, as I say, I was very neophyte in telemark skiing. And we had been told that one of the things that could set off an avalanche was a skier falling. You know, Pumm! You go down and it releases the slope and away you go. So, of course, one person could go ... and then another person. And so on, and so on. And of course, he wanted to keep it manageable for himself. I'm sure, he didn't want to have all of these people going all over the slope in case something did happen he'd want to be able to keep track of where people were ... So, of course, I'm sitting up there getting very anxious waiting for my turn to go thinking, 'Oh my god! Am I going to be the one that triggers something? Am I going to fall? And what's going to happen?' And I can remember the first time that I fell closing my eyes and just waiting for everything to start moving around me. And, it didn't. And so of course, you get up, and make a couple more turns and fall again. Again it didn't give way. But that whole time down I was really really anxious, and really uncomfortable thinking that, "oh my God, oh my God, Oh my God!"

In this second incident the adventure is described as a situation where there was only a possibility of being lost and a possibility of not being easily found. The fact that the situation had the potential to turn toward a less favourable direction lead the participant to feel unsure of what might happen, and therefore, unsafe and fearful:

> ... there was a group of us, twelve, hiking with the same company in the Rockies ... I don't like to hike with twelve people so I went ahead of them. Came to an area of these deep gorges ... I looked down one and I said "no, that's not the right one." Then I looked down the next one and I thought "nnnnn I think this is the right one." Well it wasn't. It was the wrong one. It turned out that I took the wrong way and I was alone and I realized then when I was part way down, but I was so far down I didn't want to go back up. And yes, the others wouldn't know where I was and didn't know where I was, wouldn't be able to find me ... I was concerned enough that ... I didn't stop even for a drink of water or lunch. I just kept going ... I was thinking that I was in a place that nobody knew where I was and that could be dangerous ... I felt unsafe ... And I wanted to make sure that I didn't get injured ...

The final account reveals an adventure experience based on a participant's severe and unexpected personal injury:

> We were in Willmore ... I noticed that I had lost part of my vision in my right eye, the top half. I mentioned it to the outfitter and others and we were extremely concerned and thought it was a detached retina and immediately took action - I actually evacuated myself, mostly. In other words, I walked out because there was concern that riding would further detach it ... the constant up and down ... so it was agreed that I would walk ... another fella came with me. He was on a horse, a second horse carried most of my gear. I walked. I used the second horse to cross streams. What is normally a seven hour hike we did in four hours. Time was of the essence, getting to the emergency ward in Edmonton ... I finally made it to a doctor on that evening and the next morning I was diagnosed as having a blood clot in a vessel in my eye ... The blood clot blocked the artery and hence the blood flow to the retina was blocked, was stopped, and without blood flow and without oxygen, the retina cells died ... It was an occlusion. So I permanently lost sight in the top half of my right eye.

Situations of danger and risk, like the one's previously mentioned, are representative of the unexpected nature of adventure. Participants had no way of knowing just how situations would unfold. The above accounts reveal that to venture means to confront what one believes to be a dangerous situation. By confronting dangers, participants of adventure tours also confront their fears, and by eventually "getting through" the situation, they have essentially relied on themselves and their own skills and abilities. Finally, to venture is also to fully accept the outcome of an event (whether bad or good) as a natural consequence of meeting an unexpected situation and confronting a danger or personal risk.

Remoteness

To a certain degree remoteness adds an important element to an adventure, and in other respects being in a remote area *is* an adventure. Being in a remote area in itself provides a striking contrast to the usual life and regular routine of many people. This is enough to provoke adventurous feelings for many participants of adventure tours.

For many participants, there is satisfaction in knowing that they have been to a place which is little known and where access is difficult under normal circumstances. Perhaps the significance in this is that after the fact, they are in the enviable position of becoming the storyteller of the adventure.

Some people strive for remoteness. Their efforts are directed toward attaining some sense of remoteness by travelling to places where there are few people, or where they can be alone. Remoteness becomes a key to exploration for these people as it heightens their drive to explore and to see new places.

The very simplification of life which many experience during a back country tour enables participants to be more attentive to themselves and to their surroundings. Being isolated also offers opportunities to be 'open'. Individuals, for example, often describe feelings of peacefulness and connectedness which arise out of experiencing remote places. As one co-researcher described, "I get a feeling into my stomach and my heart and my soul."

While being in a remote area offers unique and endless opportunities to see and to experience nature, others feel vulnerable when isolated from the rest of society and are fearful because of it. Wendell Berry (as cited in Schoel and Stratton, 1990) explores the nature of this fear in the following passage:

> Always in the big woods when you leave familiar ground and step off alone into a new place there will be, along with the feelings of curiosity and excitement, a little nagging of dread. It is the ancient fear of the Unknown, and it is your first bond with the wilderness you are going into. What you are doing is exploring. You are undertaking the first experience, not of the place, but of yourself in that place. It is an experience of our essential loneliness; for nobody can discover the world for anybody else. It is only after we have discovered it for ourselves that it becomes a common ground and a common bond, and we cease to be alone. (pp. 76-77)

Experiencing Nature

Experiences with nature are often unforgettable, sometimes powerful, and even profound events. These experiences may be regarded as occurring along a continuum of experiences. At one end of the continuum are what can be considered 'confrontation-with-nature' type of experiences. Within these experiences, participants are seen as working *against* nature, and nature is regarded as something to be overcome. Stories of personal risk (e.g., of being lost, and of sustaining a personal injury) exemplify confrontation-with-nature types of experiences. At the other end of the continuum are more 'accompanying-nature' type of experiences. Here, participants' experiences are more *with* nature rather than against nature. The following passages reflect a variety of experiences where participants accompany nature in some manner.

One woman explains her desire to explore nature - of wanting to further investigate certain feelings that she had at the time, as well as nature's ambience:

> I remember stopping on my horse to take in the view of the ranges, it was the middle of a hot summer's day and extremely quiet (nothing happens in the middle of a hot summers day over here). But it was calm and the thing that drew me to stop was the 'inactivity'. I found this inactivity to be an element of my adventure - the fact that nature had stopped for a few hours and here I was a mere mortal continuing with my activity. My adventure was the feeling that if I stopped I would actually be doing something that wasn't human and I found myself wanting to stay and just see what happened.

This account reveals a certain attitude and openness which is essential to any adventure. While the participant recognised the unique situation that she was in, it is her openness to the situation which is the essential "doorway" to her explorations and discoveries. The attitude of 'wanting to stay and just see what happened' is a further reflection of her openness since she is willing to accept whatever the event has to offer.

For some adventure tourists, having a direct experience with nature is to make a conscious choice to involve oneself with the natural environment. "I also enjoy the silence. I enjoy the fresh air. I enjoy going and drinking out of the cold water out of a brook. I enjoy going for a swim in the river. It's a very primeval experience." Experiences with nature may also begin with the very simplification of life that derives from taking part in an adventure tour and having to attend to basic human needs. Once you "reduce life to something very simple ... and life is just very straight forward ... you take pleasure in ... a cool drink of water, or a rainbow ... or seeing an animal."

Many co-researchers also believed that "just being out there" is an adventure. "I would never have had that opportunity to get to a place like that where nobody has been ... and just to see that untouched snow and just have a chance to be in that kind of paradise." Another participant describes her feelings of being in the presence of nature:

> Just being out in this pristine kind of area ... just to be in the presence of those monoliths ... it was ah, pretty awesome. So, the whole thing with me was that it was a place I didn't want to leave... [I was thinking] that I wanted to stay. I didn't want to go.

To be present in nature, or 'to be' in nature, is to be aware and 'in the moment'. This is easily seen in one co-researcher's comment,

> I like to sit next to my backpack and just look around and you just enjoy being there and it's quiet and you can sit there for one or two hours and just really enjoy your environment. And it might be hard to imagine for people who haven't done it before but if you sit in the right place, it's the greatest of pleasures.

Being in the moment, as another co-researcher illustrated, is to be steeped in nature's beauty:

> ... it was one of those unbelievably pristine, beautiful, cloudless, sunny, warm, wonderful days in the mountains and ah, the skiing was just beautiful and it was easy, it was comfortable, it was through the trees, there was no pressure. Ah, lots of stopping just to enjoy and drink in the scenery ... I can almost, just place myself back there and see everything. I mean, it really was one of those mornings where the snow was just a carpet of jewels and everything was twinkling and the air was clear and the sky was blue. It was perfect. It was just perfect.

For one gentleman, it is the relationship between the natural beauty of an area and the isolated nature of a place which is significantly adventurous. He explains that while the streams, mountains, and wildflowers, for example, are naturally beautiful, "part of the adventure is the fact that not many people do this sort of thing ... there is relative isolation and you pay a price for that in terms of physical activity." For this man it is important to experience the beauty of nature in a relatively isolated area, where he knows not many people will be present and where not many people have ever been, and finally, to be in that kind of environment that he has physically worked towards (e.g., hiking). Thus, it becomes a situation that he has 'created' for himself, by making important decisions and preselecting certain preferred conditions which are necessary elements for his 'targeted' adventure.

Experiences with nature invoke a variety of emotional responses. "That atmosphere is always relaxing, I mean, no matter how much I'm exerting myself," stated one woman. Another participant paradoxically felt both "relaxation and excitement" at the same time. Yet another woman revealed,

> I get a lot of satisfaction and fulfilment ... on a spiritual level and emotional level from just being out there. I don't necessarily have to be doing anything ... when I get out there I get this feeling into my stomach and my heart and my soul, you know, just ah, oh excitement and warmth and that kind of thing.

Indeed, those who make the opportunity to experience the natural environment, "to take it in," find pleasure and enjoyment in such spiritual events. A participant describes such a "contemplative" or "meditative" occasion:

> I remember one particular ridge I hiked up ... It was a good place to look around ... to sit next to my backpack and just look around and you just enjoy being there and it's quiet and you can sit there for one or two hours and just really enjoy your environment ... it's the greatest of pleasures ... and you think 'I'm really happy here. I don't need all the trappings of civilization...'

Experiencing nature is a time to deeply appreciate natural processes, as it is a time for wonder;

> What interests me a lot more is to look at a mountain and to see folds in the mountain and to sort of imagine how that mountain might have formed. You look at a fossil and look back as to where did this come from ... you look at the trees and see what has happened and the environment that was created that favoured the

> growth of certain types of flowers ...

A time to make contact with the environment;

> I look at almost everything I see, I walk through the forest, I see beautiful big tree trunks, you see mosses, and so on ... It's the sort of thing I really enjoy looking at. When you walk up to a tree and you run your hand over the rough bark or so, or you're looking at some flowers or you look at the pretty brook or so. Or maybe you sit on top of a ridge and you look around and you see all that it is, is mountains and so on.

And a time to view wildlife;

> ... there were half a dozen sheep or so and they saw me and I approached them, so I sat down and watched them for about two hours. There were some briefly butting and so on. Then eventually they moved on ... Being up on the mountain and watching the sheep was an experience for the soul and it was enlightening.

In addition to viewing nature and other previously mentioned activities, walking or hiking, and its effects, can also be distinctively insightful. There is a "connection between the human body and the ground when you walk." One is able to gain "a sense of the place" derived from walking, a sense of the place that only walking can foster. To travel by foot is "a nice way to be there. And it's a nice feeling to climb to the top of something that you have a sense of the place when you reach a peak or ridge, or wherever you're going." To gain a sense of a place is in fact to sense and feel it, thus at some level, to know and understand it. It can be said, that to explore a new area is to 'know' the new territory. Moreover, to re-explore an area is to come to know an area at a different level of understanding, or to learn anew, thereby continually developing a connection to the land.

A sense of connectedness can occur unexpectedly when "all of a sudden you experience this feeling and everything is right, this is where I want to be and this is where

I'm meant to be." Such intense and profound feelings of attachment to the land (or a place) are key life experiences:

> And I was startled by that because I wasn't born here and I didn't grow up here and yet that kind of place felt like home to me. Felt like I'd finally come home ... home, in the sense of a place that I really felt good about, felt comfortable, felt excited about being here.

So what does just being out there mean? "I guess I think of the east slopes, hiking in the east slopes and whatnot, that it's part of my country. I have some connection with this particular kind of wilderness."

The Learning Experience

The adventure experience is a learning experience. "You learn that you can teach old dogs new tricks," as one woman remarked, "... that you can do things that you thought were absolutely impossible." Whether it be back country ski technique or valuable practical trail riding knowledge, participants discover that there is always something new to learn. In addition, an adventure experience has the capacity to cultivate a higher self image. You also learn that you can do things "that you thought were silly or stupid, you shouldn't even be attempting them."

Experiential knowledge is a key component of the learning experience. That is, knowledge based on direct 'field' experience, with the appropriate equipment, for example, and under 'real' conditions. For instance, some participants are able to develop at least some measure of the coordination necessary to adequately operate a dog sled team. By participating directly in the preparatory stages of an outing (harnessing the dog team), one co-researcher felt it meaningful to have gained "a little bit of an insider's knowledge on how these things are done." Such knowledge is seen as being an important foundation from which to build. "It's nice to have been able to do it and maybe next time I'll know what I'm doing. If I want to go on a longer trip I'll already have the basic skills." Developing some of the essential skills in a new activity can lead to a sense of control within that new environment which, in turn, can foster a sense of independence.

The educational component of the adventure experience also extends toward the cultural heritage of an area. That is, the adventure involves "learning a little bit more about the culture and ... what their lifestyle is like, what their background is like." One participant pointed out that, for example, "... you'd see some old abandoned farms that - what she [the guide] shared with us was the fact that many of the younger generation had left Ireland because they didn't want to continue with the farming. They didn't see any profit in it." The following further illustrates what a co-researcher found particularly memorable:

> ... the areas that we went through had a lot of peat bogs. We were looking out in the fields and seeing these colours and we weren't quite sure if it was bags of peat being loaded up, but then they started to move and then we realized that they were the sheep and each farmer marked his sheep with a colour and a design so he can tell them if they get over the wrong fence. So they had certain colours splashed on them ... So it was a learning experience for us.

Experiencing the local people in their 'natural environment' (doing what they normally do) is also educational. The following authentic tourist experience, while it describes the atmosphere of the local pubs, is a significant culturally educational event:

> ... everybody seemed to know everyone ... but at the same time they were very accepting of us ... as the evening went on and some of the musicians that were there regularly in the evening gathered and people began singing, they didn't feel at all inhibited that there were strangers there ... so from that perspective it was a

> warm atmosphere ... it was very open, inviting ... it wasn't stuffy. It wasn't staged. It was the local community.

The Social Experience

The social aspect is another important part of the adventure experience - so much so that it was stated that "the people are half of it." In one sense, unhealthy relationships with other participants of an adventure have a strong potential to detract from an adventure. On the other hand, it is the interaction with others that deepens the adventure experience since it can "bring out the best in people."

Even for those who may seek solitude during certain times of the day while on a wilderness trip, there remains the opportunity to come out of the wilderness and into a "pocket of civilization" and "have the warmth, security, enjoyment of [one's] companions." It is important to be with people who's company you enjoy and share adventure stories, for instance, in "a comfortable safe haven." For one participant, at least, being with a person in the natural environment allows for open communication and an easy exchange of ideas to occur in a unique manner.

The mere presence of others can have a compounding effect. As one co-researcher illuminated, when "you're with other people and you know that they enjoy what you enjoy, it enhances your enjoyment. An enjoyment shared is an enjoyment doubled."

Still, another benefit of companionship is the chance to see, first-hand, someone interact with the land in a way which is unique and awe-inspiring as the following account attests:

> We were coming back to camp, but off trail and down the mountain. Down the side of the mountain. And you're off trail, you don't know exactly where you are, exactly where you're going to come out, or exactly where the camp is. And we followed a game trail for a ways and Bob said, 'mmm we should be further off to the left'. And so we went down the game trail some more and he said 'mmm we should really be further off to the left.' And so then we went further off to the left and pretty soon he said, 'ah yes, the vibrations feel better'... and he has that kind of innate sense of where he is!

The Comparative Experience

Another striking characteristic of adventure is best described as a divergence from the 'here and now', a divergence from the present adventure into some other past adventure. As participants of an adventure tour are actively involved in their respective activities, there is at times a tendency to mentally step away from where they are and to become cognitively absorbed in a similar past situation and what that experience meant to them. Through this reconnection with a similar experience participants begin to contrast the past adventure with the present adventure that they are experiencing at the time. As a participant explains,

> ... I also had the opportunity to reflect on when I was in Wales many years ago and had gone pony trekking ... And so I went down and spent some time with her [a friend] and she had arranged for us to go pony trekking in the Beacons with some guys she went to school with from Cardiff University. So, they kind of laid out the day, based on what the hours of the pub were, opening and closing. And you get there when they open and they had a few of their Welsh ciders and then the singing would kick in and then it was time to get back on the horse and get back to where you were staying for the night ... It was beautiful. It was really gorgeous.

Transformation: JP's adventure experience

The following is a phenomenological description of one particular co-researcher's (JP's) two-day dog sled adventure which typifies an adventure experience that undergoes transformation. Among the many changes, JP's adventure begins with his experiences of feeling anxious and overwhelmed, and finally enters a phase where he experiences the beauty of nature and a feeling of inner peace. Notably, a number of the previously mentioned themes are also represented within the following description which serves to illustrate the complexities and the multi-faceted nature of the adventure experience.

JP felt that he was extrinsically motivated to participate in the two-day dog sled adventure. Since his girlfriend and her friends planned to take part, he decided that he would follow along. JP's expectations at the time were limited aside from believing that "you just sit on the sled and the dogs pull you." He began his adventure by attending (with the entire tourist group) an evening information session during which the owner/operator provided an orientation to the site and an introduction to rudimentary dog sledding technique in preparation for day one of the experience.

On the morning of the first day JP took command of a dog sled and a team of dogs. Upon entering into this new situation he felt unsure of what he was getting into and unsure of how the sled worked. Consequently, he was "faced with [an] anxiety complex" and asked himself, "Can I do it?" As he struggled with the dog sled and team, JP was initially frustrated with other participants, who, on the trail ahead of him, weren't able to properly 'work with' the dogs. As a result "the dogs would stop and then they'd get in a fight and everyone else would be backed up so you'd be waiting, and waiting, and waiting." The challenge on the first day was "to keep the dogs going and to make sure they didn't stop and to make sure that you continually kept up with them. And also to make sure that they didn't fight with the other dogs."

The next morning, JP was anxious about the day and doubted his abilities to handle a dog sled. He was overwhelmed with what lay ahead. "Can I remember the commands? Can I remember how to control the sled with my feet and my hands?" Day two also brought with it much colder temperatures, which overnight had caused the trails to become icy. Some of the steeper hills were especially hazardous since they turned into "a sheet of ice." JP describes what it was like waiting at the top of the steepest hill:

> we all had to stop and wait for each person to go down because it was so risky. So we'd let one person go at a time and I remember seeing person after person fall and wipe out on this sheet of ice ... and I'm thinking to myself, 'Can I do this? This is pretty risky'.

Adding to the risk was the fact that the hook used for stopping the dog sled (at the bottom of the hill) would often fly out of control, and at one point JP remembers "one person got gashed right in the leg."

At the same time, JP was determined to become better at controlling the dog sled. In fact, his general goal of the trip had evolved toward this end. He was enjoying dog sledding, especially because of the physical nature of the activity, which initially surprised him, but for which he had a new appreciation. As a result, he became more intrinsically motivated. He then set a more immediate goal for himself which was the challenge of "being able to make it down the hill without falling" and certainly, without injury. JP describes his descent as follows:

> And when I was going down I was a little fearful at first, but then once I felt like I was in control - it was probably about two-thirds of the way down - that fear gradually started to go away ... it sort of changed from fear almost to self-confidence. That 'yeah, I can do this.' It was like the little engine that could. It starts out 'I can't do this.' and then, 'I think I can, I think I can' and then gradually by the end you *know* you can.

JP considers his successful run down the hill the "highlight" of his trip. His reaction toward meeting his challenge is one of almost disbelief. "Wow, I did that! That's probably the toughest part of the whole course and I did it without falling down. And I kept control of my dogs too and my sled."

JP's increased level of ability to control the dog team and sled in turn boosted his confidence in his newly developed skills. As a more competent and confident dog sledder he began to "let the dogs run faster ... to run faster with them and to take corners a lot faster." Indeed, JP felt that he had attained his initial goal and felt euphoric, on a high. "I now feel like I'm in control of the situation, I have the abilities to keep these dogs moving." JP describes how "everything just came together" as he came upon an opening on the trail:

> ... it would have been a lake but it was frozen over and the trees were just beautiful and they were covered with some snow and with some frost from the night before ... and the environment of being outside in the wintertime in this park and no-one else around me and just seeing the beauty of the trees and the landscape and feeling free and one with the environment ... an inner peace as well, like this is just a beautiful sight and it's just great to be here.

Living History (Being *with* another time and place): Rob's adventure experience

To gain an understanding of travel "with another time and place" it is best to reveal Rob's experiences of a particular dog sled adventure.

Rob's adventure is generally rooted in his interest in Canadian history, and more specifically, in his readings of historical figures and their travels and explorations through Canada. "I get an imaginative buzz from thinking about what it was like then." After countless hours reading about a certain character or time-period in history Rob is spirited to action. "I gotta go, I can't read anymore. I gotta go there ... and experience it first hand." Knowing that dog sledding has a rich history, and was a primary means of travel for some early explorers, Rob wanted to travel through places where the dog sled was *the* mode of travel. Thus, the adventure for him is to travel as traditionally as possible and "to hook into that other time period and to hook into another way of being on the Canadian landscape" while "recapturing the experience and the feel of those journals" which he had read over and over again.

Rob recalls one particular commercial dog sled trip through a remote area of Manitoba. One day along the trail, the small group of travellers came upon a group of Chipewyan trappers who had just killed a caribou. They were then in the process of having a caribou breakfast and invited the dog sledders to join them. Rob had certainly read about this type of scenario in a historical context, but felt he "was now *living* history." Similarly, knowing for example, that he was walking a certain route that Samuel Hearne had traversed "enriches my imagination," explains Rob, "Cause for that moment I'm a little bit a part of that story. And it's the stories that give the landscape it's meaning."

On another occasion the group of Native trappers visited them one night at their campsite. He describes the cultural experience of their visit as follows:

> It was neat to sit in a wall tent with these guys and pass an hour and maybe say five sentences. They'd say five, you'd say five. Another five minutes would pass, you might say some more ... I marvelled at the fact that there was no need to fill the space with dialogue. It just was a very relaxing moment ... probably everything we talked about was about the trail, and when there were long pauses, nobody was uncomfortable. Now I was a little bit because I had to adjust to it.

For Rob, it was a "decontextualizing" moment. Since he knew that he was "with the group that was *of* this land," he was engaged in exploring "another way of living in the world than the way I'm used to." In Rob's words, "it challenges you to rethink *who* you are as opposed to *what* you are."

Further, Rob describes the "aura" of life on the trail and of being in the northern Manitoba landscape:

> ... the technology of the dog sledding camp is very comforting, very warm and very shrouding. You get the dogs howling behind you, you get the wind blowing, and you're really comfortable in the wall tent. And all is wonderful with the world. You're up there in northern Manitoba and you don't have a care in the world other than what you might see tomorrow. That head space is an adventure in and of itself ... it sort of comes with being out for four or five days and knowing that there's four or five days more of that before you start thinking about finishing. It's that wonderful mid-period of the trip where you're *just there*, you're just 'on trip'.

To be in that 'head space' is to "let that mid-period of the trip really take control," and for Rob, to "let the land and the travel means change who I am."

As a result of his 'openness' to the overall dog sled experience Rob felt " a warm buzz of connectedness." He believes that "... you feel part of a tradition, part of a greatness, part of a greater human enterprise. You feel like a historical being in Canada. You feel real ... you feel connected to everything that's gone before." The consequences of such an adventure are resonant. "The trips I want to be on are the ones that take me. And certainly on the dog sledding trip that happened for sure. It was long enough that the trip was continued long after it was over."

Summary

The phenomenological description of adventure is clearly broad in scope and rich in terms of the variety and types of portrayed experiences. Although various themes are presented, the reader should be reminded that they are not generalizations, but 'threads around which the phenomenological description is facilitated'. These 'threads' are interwoven in a complex pattern, a pattern that is just beginning to be understood.

As the last two themes (transformation and living history) suggest, an adventure experience can be represented by any number of themes. In addition, an adventure can go through a number of transformations. For example, JP's adventure experiences ranged from feelings of anxiety and fear, to a sense of control, and an eventual peaceful union with nature. At the same time, however, a single theme (e.g., freedom), or element of adventure, adequately captures the essence of adventure for some people. While the nature of each theme makes an important contribution to the integrity of the overall phenomenological description of adventure, it is possible to recognize a number of key elements of the adventure experience.

Two elements essential to the adventure experience are dependent on participants themselves. An adventure requires, first of all, that participants be open to new experiences, and secondly, that they possess an attitude of adventure.

Openness is integral to an adventure since it allows participants to go beyond what they usually do as well as their usual comforts. To be open to new experiences, is to embrace novelty, and in many cases, those who possess this openness often deliberately seek new experiences. They are willing to put themselves in situations that are unique, compared to previous experiences, and to involve themselves in new activities. Hence, to be open to new experiences is also to be willing to fully accept that which is going to happen, whether it is perceived as positive or negative.

To have an attitude of adventure is to possess a 'spirit of adventure'. A spirit of adventure is found in people who are willing to try something new "just for fun, just for something different," and in those who participate merely "to see what happens." This 'frame of mind' is the driving force behind the will to explore and is the source of a positive outlook on a given situation. There is an eager and zestful lightheartedness in the adventurous attitude which directly affects a participant's outlook on a particular experience.

Both openness and an adventurous attitude may be considered two distinct elements which are key to the adventure experience. Their close association is reflected in the following 1836 passage by George Back (as cited in Schoel & Stratton, 1990):

> There is something exciting in the first start, even upon an ordinary journey. The bustle of preparation - the act of departing, which seems like a decided step taken - the prospect of change, and consequent stretching out of the imagination - have at all times the effect of stirring the blood, and giving a quicker motion to the spirits. It may be conceived then with what sensations I set forth on my journey

> into the Arctic wilderness. I had escaped from the wretchedness of a dreary and disastrous winter - from scenes and tales of suffering and death - from wearisome inaction and monotony - from disappointment and heart-sickening care. Before me were novelty and enterprise; hope, curiosity, and the love of adventure were my companions; and even the prospect of difficulties and dangers to be encountered, with the responsibility inseparable from command, instead of dampening rather heightened the enjoyment of the moment. In turning my back on the Fort, I felt my breast lightened, and my spirit, as it were, set free again; and with a quick step, Mr. King and I (for my companion seemed to share in the feeling) went on our way rejoicing. (p. 65)

The elements of openness and a spirit of adventure first became apparent after a particular interview session. When I had initially telephoned a co-researcher in order to conduct the planned interview, she had mentioned that an overseas male friend was visiting her at the time, and that he had also gone on the same dog sledding tour that she was just preparing to talk about. She asked whether I would want to interview her friend too. I said that I would like to since he was with her and willing to be interviewed. The woman's interview was successful in that she was able to describe her experience in terms of, what she truly believed to be, an adventure. For her, it was an adventure in every sense of the word.

Contrary to the first interview, the second interview with her friend (who was on the very same day trip) revealed a very different and unexpected attitude. He conceded that the experience was not an adventure because the excursion only lasted a day, and therefore, the distance that they travelled was relatively short. "I don't really describe a lot of things as an adventure ... I think an adventure is something really big," he stated. On the one hand, then, an adventure tour was a very real adventure for one person, and on the other, it was not an adventure experience at all. Evidently, what may be adventure for one person, may not necessarily be the case for another.

It could be said that the differences in perceptions are based on the participants' different levels of experience with outdoor activities. However, the gentleman in the second interview had rarely even been in the Canadian wilderness and had never been dog sledding! Even novelty to this degree had no bearing on his 'perceptions' of adventure. The differences in experiences may be perceived in terms of what the gentleman was lacking. Clearly, he was lacking an adventurous attitude - a spirit of adventure which could see him approach the incident in a positive and lighthearted manner. He also lacked openness in the sense that he failed to see, however trifle the experience may seem at the outset, that it could potentially harbour new discoveries, and that there just *may* be something to be learned from them.

The story reveals that an attitude of adventure (or a spirit of adventure), and a sense of openness are both of prime importance in an adventure. This finding corresponds to what authors have identified as a primary characteristic of leisure, which they call "receptivity," or an open-minded attitude (as cited in McDonald and Schreyer, 1995).

The role that the imagination plays in the adventure experience is a powerful one. The imaginative experience is a means whereby participants enact their wishes and expectations in an unrestrained manner. Participants mentally freely explore areas where they may make their own discoveries. As one participant explained, "I was filled with thoughts of riding through beautiful countryside, exploring areas that only my imagination could explore and having to deal with incidents and events as they presented themselves to me." At the same time, the imaginative adventure may *create* certain desires upon which a participant is compelled to act. "My adventure was the feeling that if I stopped I would actually be doing something that wasn't human and I found myself wanting to stay and just see what happened." While the imaginative experience seems to play a prominent role in an adventure, it is difficult to know exactly which factors engage the imagination, and perhaps more importantly, why the imagination becomes engaged in the first place.

Three additional elements of adventure which are closely related and often integrate with each other are novelty, exploration, and the unexpected. Novelty generates an adventure experience for many people since it provides unique opportunities and situations that may be unobtainable under normal conditions. To be open to new experiences is to embrace novelty, especially for those who are willing to forgo familiarity (of activity and setting, for example) in order to satiate their curiosity. And, once a novel situation has been explored, the adventurer is inevitably drawn toward subsequent new ventures.

Similarly, the act of exploring is cyclical. Eager participants often yearn to explore more territory, whether the territory is new, or familiar, or whether it presents itself in the form of an activity or even the human spiritual dimension. Explorations, then, are actions (physical or mental) directed toward novel circumstances. It is extremely important for adventurers to 'see for themselves', thus, to experience for themselves. "For nobody can discover the world for anybody else." To experience is to gain knowledge. In addition, an outcome of exploration is knowledge of place and self, and as Wendell Berry suggests, "yourself in that place" (as cited in Schoel & Stratton, 1990, p. 76-77).

The unexpected brings with it an element of surprise. Whenever the unknown is faced head-on, there looms in the horizon, the potential for unique and unforeseeable experiences and opportunities, such as feelings of connectedness to nature. Such unpredictable circumstances are the impacts of novelty.

These three elements (novelty, exploration, and the unexpected) may be perceived as being central to the experience of adventure. They essentially form the core of the adventure experience. It is from this core that participants' experiences first extend, and then become 'characterized' in the form of, for example, learning experiences, or nature experiences, or a blend of various characteristics. For example, Rob's sense of exploration and entering into a new 'environment' developed into his experiences of living history and being a part of history. Similarly, Jeannette's explorations into unknown territory soon led to an experience of freedom and expression of freedom.

CHAPTER V

ADVENTURE NOTES

Apart from the phenomenological data that were presented in Chapter IV, the research yielded additional qualitative data which is directly related to adventure and adventure tourism. This chapter is distinct from the previous chapter because the data were not considered experiential, or directly related to the adventure experience at the time of the event, or because responses were based on hypothetical situations. Some of the themes within this chapter developed naturally (e.g., barriers to adventure), while other themes developed as a result of questions that were more focused. For example, participants were asked about the benefits of the interview, merely to probe whether the interviews were regarded positively or not. On this basis, five themes were identified. Nevertheless, this chapter is included because it was foreseen that at least some of the data had the potential to be of use in the following discussion chapter. On the whole, however, the following data only add to the understanding of adventure and adventure tourism and may be of use to the reader and for consideration in future research studies. Thus, this chapter reveals co-researchers' beliefs and experiences as they relate to the following five themes: the stimulus, motivations for adventure; impediments/barriers to adventure; facilitating the adventure experience; benefits of the interview/reflection experience; and profound and lasting effects.

The Stimulus: Motivations

For some people, to participate in an adventure is to fulfill a long-held dream. One gentleman who grew up in Europe with strong influences from books centred around North American outdoor life and nature considered the wilderness (and the experiences that it has brought and could bring) “a boyhood dream.” Another woman remembered moments on a trip “where it was like every single dream as I ever had as a little kid ... It kind of was realized.” Perhaps this at least partly explains why adventure “really brings out the child in somebody.”

The draw towards an adventure experience also has a practical component in that it offers an opportunity to practise and test new skills as explained by two neophytes:

> I had taken the mountaineering course through the Alpine club prior to that and so knew the very basics ... about glacier travel and rescue ... So that was my first exposure to, and experience with, putting the two together. The course and the reality of being out there.
>
> I had just been getting into telemark skiing, and so I wanted to sort of test out my new found skills and in an environment that was different than what I had been practising here.

The new environment, the remoteness of the location, and the fact that some areas are accessible only by helicopter, remains “attractive” and “tantalizing” to many.

To embark on an adventure is to search. The purpose of such a quest can be for new meaning in life, hence, a search for renewal, as one participant reveals,

> ... it was a time of my life when a lot of things were changing. Different things were happening ... And so when that happens, a lot of your normal stability is shaken up and you go searching for either that stability or you go searching for something that is new and can be defined as yours. And not that is dictated by another circumstance or another individual, or a set of individuals, or something like that. This is something that you’re trying to formulate and maybe redefine

> who you are ...

For some people the stimulus is firstly, to remove themselves from the complexities of their day-to-day lives, and secondly, to enter into a situation "that introduces a great deal of simplicity." And as one participant voiced,

> I want to be very informal. I don't have to want to know what the name of the flower is or what have you. I like to throw my watch away and these sort of things, you know, you really want to be totally free from sort of confining encumbrances ...

Impediments/Barriers to Adventure

One of the more surprising themes that emerged from the study concerns impediments to adventure. As co-researchers began to reflect on and describe their adventure experiences, some of them could not keep from recounting particular situations in which adventure experiences were impeded in some way. While they were fully able to describe certain experiences which were wholly adventurous, some participants immediately contrasted those adventures with certain events or situations where, for example, the feeling was one of "this took away from the adventure ...", " it would have been more of an adventure if ...", or "I was hoping (at the time) that I/we could ..." As such, the following impediments, while self-explanatory, have been italicized for ease of identification followed by its representative passage (participant remarks).

Taking photographs

> It does complicate travel ... when you take pictures. No question about that. You get sidetracked and so I find I take fewer and fewer pictures ... I'd just as soon sit down and look at the landscape around me and enjoy it without this additional task.

Noise pollution in the wilderness

> I guess the only thing that detracted from the adventure kind of experience for me was the helicopters dropping off Alpine heli-skiers on the ridge next over. So every so often in the day, that we were there, the silence was really only broken by the choppers coming in.

The contrived experience

> The control and organisation of the trip by its guides (and the very well trained horses) reduced my adventurous yearnings to a minimum. I couldn't just take the horse for a quick ride in any direction other than where the guide wanted me to go. Trails were designated, times were adhered to and even experiences were engineered ... I felt intruded upon and that my experiences were being engineered to fit in with deadlines, timetables and what others felt was adventurous.

Size of group

> I don't like to hike with a lot of people ... the twelve people was way too many. I felt that was too many and so Brian and I tended to go off on our own.
>
> For me the element of you and nature is another key to adventure and larger groups are just not conducive to this.

Relationships

> But now with Wildtours, you spend two weeks with them, so you need to be able to get along well with people who are running the tour, and they along with the clients ... so it's extremely important.
>
> It would spoil things. If the relationship isn't good, it would sour, considerably sour things. Which is bad - you'd have a bad feeling about the whole trip.
>
> ... we said to him, that if that other guy showed up in the parking lot, we would forfeit whatever money we'd paid and go away. And we would have. Not just me, Dave too. So it's real important to have a good relationship.
>
> I think if you were to take the contrary and you were on a trip and someone was, 'oh, it's a very steep trail and there's no water, it's going to be very cold up in that basin and the flowers are not as good as what we saw yesterday'. That I think would be destructive to your enjoyment.

Commercialization of adventure

> I am tending to believe that I don't think commercial operators should be trying to sell adventure, it is a very personal thing and if you have to buy it, you will never really feel it.

> It would have been much more of an adventure had I been on my own... Cause it's all very guided

Lack of pre-trip preparation

> I'd want a bit more instruction on what they were wearing. Cause the way we came into ours ... you're pretty much on your own ... I like the idea of trip meetings before anything.

Understanding of adventure

> I felt that the other group members had not yet taken the time to find out what 'adventure' meant to them prior to joining the tour. They seemed to be expecting the guide to tell them and they will never find it by waiting for someone else to give it to them.

> I suppose I just see that "adventure" is too often used as a synonym for "activity" and thus misses a magnitude of areas where adventure could be.

> these horse-assisted trips, almost nobody's done them because the horse outfitters mostly want you to ride with them. They don't understand people hiking. Not only that, they don't understand why people *would* hike. Where it doesn't seem that crazy to me .... There are places where the horses can't go and whereas people can go anywhere horses can go ... I don't think horse outfitters understand the connection between the human body and the ground when you walk.

Facilitating the Adventure Experience

Tour operators, or guides, who provide tourism experiences act as 'gate-keepers' to the adventure experience. That is, because they are charged with the responsibility of leading tour participants they have the power to control not only where they go, but what they may see and ultimately do. A co-researcher explains how her guide acted in this regard:

> She was willing to give us what we were looking for in terms of advancing us as she felt comfortable with our riding skills because it was also the fact that these are their horses and their livelihood. So they want to make sure the people that are riding them know what they're doing too before they let them carry on too much. So, since we do a lot of cross-country, when we got to the beach she ensured that we *could* do a lot of galloping and things like that. She saw that our

> skills were good and therefore she felt comfortable letting the horses take us in that direction.

Near the end of each of the sets of interviews (or correspondence), research participants were asked, "In terms of providing an adventure experience, can the tour operator do anything to facilitate this?" One participant cautioned,

> if they were to change it to what you're suggesting, that infuses an element of less control for them than the way it is set up right now because it builds in an expectation of educating, teaching, learning, which is not really part of what their operation is ... So I guess they *could*, but that would necessitate changing their operation.

Another participant suggested that the tour operator who he usually travels with already facilitates the adventure experience by giving advice to clients about where to go during their free time while on the trip. Thus, the tour operator provides windows of opportunity for individual exploration. In another more unique situation, a client remarked how the trail guide joined participants in their exploration of a new area and shared in the venture:

> [the guide] takes along a couple of extra saddle horses and some extra saddles so that people can go off and do rides. And I know that last year John and Swede and I - Swede, one of the packers [guides] - went off into a basin over a trail that is maybe used once a year, if that. And, for John and me it was an adventure because we're not experienced horse people and the terrain was quite steep and trusting the horse ... So we got to go in and go to a place that was new, that Swede had not been to, nor John, nor I.

Yet another co-researcher suggests that guides may want to expand the options provided for clients and add some sophistication by offering experiential opportunities. He suggests such activities as "wake them up early for a sunrise," or have participants "smell" the wilderness area "and take some deep breaths and breathe it in." Through these types of experiences people could begin to "acknowledge just for fleeting seconds that there is this greater enterprise of life and community with animals and with nature that they're part of."

Benefits of the Interview/Reflection Experience

At the end of the second interview participants were asked, "if at all, do you think you benefitted (got anything of value) from these interviews, from talking about your adventure experience(s)?" Virtually all participants of the study enjoyed talking about their adventures as they took the opportunity to 'relive' their experiences. As one participant proclaimed, "I confirmed my love for adventure - it is easy to feel it inside but it comes alive when you have to talk to someone about it." She also continued to say, "It gave me an avenue to clarify general ideas, feelings, wants and needs that I have in my own personal adventure." Similarly, another participant stated

> I think in talking and being interviewed you really have to put a finger on what you like about these sort of experiences and it makes you think a little bit. You ask yourself, 'what was it really that I sort of enjoyed?' ... I think you get to know yourself better.

For one co-researcher, the interview clarified key aspects of her life:

> I think the first thing that comes into my mind now is that it probably crystallized for me sort of the tracking, the progression of things as we talked along. It made me focus a little bit more on the way things were then and the way things are now and how I approach things differently and how I think about myself and my abilities and the likelihood of success when I venture into something that is untried and unknown because that's something that a person just doesn't, at least, I don't tend to do in a reflective mode, just normally. But through our discussion, of course, it forced me to make those connections or see where those links happened and what the results of them were.

For another participant, the process of reflection enabled him to understand his experience at a deeper level. He explains that

> I think it helps me put it in perspective, in terms of what I actually did out there. Like it was - you come out, you do the thing, you do the trip and then it's done. And then you have pictures or whatever and you talk about it with your friends but you don't really talk about the real true experience you go through. Like there's sort of this interaction that you had with these people you went with and there's sort of your own personal experience, and it's more the interaction things that you talk about. You know, what things you did with this person, or what happened when - it's more the *interaction* thing you talk about rather than what you actually felt about the trip ... So I'd say this is probably the first time I ever talked about my personal feelings about the experience.

JP stated that having the opportunity to talk about his dog sledding adventure "helps to really realize that you have to put it in perspective about why it's important for you personally." When asked why, he explained

> I think it's more of a confidence booster in terms of yeah, if I could master something like dog sledding where I had no idea about what I was doing and I was able to go in there and actually come out at the end feeling good about my abilities, then I think that was a positive thing ... If it carries over to other activities that I do, maybe new activities that I might try out, it may make me less hesitant to try new things, like more adventure activities like rock climbing, or white water rafting.

Profound and Lasting Effects

An adventure experience can have a profound and lasting effect for some people and this is certainly evident in Sue's comments about her experiences. As Sue recalled her very first back country ski trip, she also stressed the importance of how "it opened a lot of doors." Her initial back country trip was, for her, a "baby step" and the beginning of what would be a series of other types of adventures. Her continued participation in other adventures affected Sue's personal life in a very positive way. "It's helped to focus me on setting goals in a way that I never did before." In addition, Sue affirms that she is more able to effectively cope with many of life's uncontrollable circumstances, because, as Sue remarks, "I know better who I am and the depths of what I have to draw on, inside." This "spill over" effect into her personal life, she believes, is "one of the best things that [she has] taken away from all of these kinds of things."

CHAPTER VI

TOWARD A BROADER UNDERSTANDING OF ADVENTURE

The phenomenological description of the adventure experience has attempted to portray the breadth of the adventure experience for soft adventure tourists. The in depth description, which is characterised by the sixteen identified themes (see Table 2), may go beyond one's typical ideas of adventure as, for example, involving physical hardship, overcoming nature, and risk. In particular, the theme headings of 'the imaginative experience', 'freedom', and 'living history', are among those which add further dimensions to the adventure experience and were not foreseeable at the outset of the study.

Another of the more surprising elements of the phenomenological description is the variety and the extent to which nature oriented experiences were identified by co-researchers. These experiences *with* nature include: making contact with nature; experiences of heightened awareness, and of nature's beauty; feelings of wonder; profound experiences of peace and connectedness to nature and to the land; and other situations which are highly emotional, awe-inspiring, and spiritual.

A number of these types of experiences with nature have also been referred to as 'nature-based spiritual experiences', which some authors (Driver, Dustin, Baltic, Elsner and Peterson, 1996) have recently brought into the forefront of parks and protected areas management issues. Many of the experiences with nature (mentioned above), in fact, parallel these 'nature-based spiritual experiences' which include: "introspection and reflection on deep personal values; the elements of human devotion, reverence, respect,

Table 2 Thematic Description of The Experience of Adventure

The Imaginative Experience
- "Exploring areas that only my mind could explore"

Hesitation and Doubt
- Doubt about ones own ability, "Can I do it?"
- Thoughts of "Pain. I might get hurt. I might die."

Fear
- Fear of not being good enough
- Sudden realization of being in a remote area
- Fear of potential injury

Novelty
- Uncertainty of conditions
- An attitude of "just for fun"
- To be open to new experiences
- Novelty leads to further explorations

Freedom
- Without a set path or definite direction
- To follow ones whims
- 'Come-what-may' attitude
- A climate of exploration
- More unknowns than usual

Exploration
- "A spirit of adventure"
- To see with ones own eyes
- Exploration as cyclical
- New experiences/activities

Challenge
- Physical and mental
- Skill development
- Unexpected challenges
- To match the competence of the guide

The Unexpected
- Element of surprise
- Evacuation leading to a "powerful experience"
- A rescue operation leading to an experience with nature

Personal Risk
- Potential for injury
- Being lost
- Actual personal injury
- To confront dangers and one's own fears
- Acceptance of outcomes

Table 2 *(Continued)* Thematic Description of The Experience of Adventure

Remoteness
- An adventure in itself
- Peacefulness, connectedness
- Vulnerability

Experiencing Nature
- Confrontation with nature vs. Accompanying nature
- A conscious choice
- In the presence of nature
- In the moment
- Steeped in nature's beauty
- Creating the situation (beauty of nature, isolated area, physical hike)
- Spiritual fulfilment
- Enjoyment of nature
- Wonder
- Making contact with the environment
- Connection between the human body and the ground
- Feelings of attachment to the land, sense of place

The Learning Experience
- "That you can do things that you thought were absolutely impossible"
- A higher self image
- Experiential knowledge
- Cultural heritage

The Social Experience
- The warmth, security, and enjoyment of companions
- "An enjoyment shared is an enjoyment doubled"

The Comparative Experience
- A contrast with a past adventure

Transformation: JP's Adventure Experience
- Feeling anxious and overwhelmed
- Increased competence and confidence
- Feeling of control
- Experiencing the beauty of nature and feelings of inner peace

Living History (Being *with* another time and place):
Rob's adventure experience
- To 'hook into' another time period
- To hook into another way of being on the Canadian landscape
- To live history
- To feel part of a tradition

wonder, awe, mystery or lack of total understanding; inspiration; interaction with and relationship to something other and greater than oneself; sense of humility; and sense of timelessness, integration, continuity, connectedness, and community" (Driver, et al, 1996, p. 5). In addition, these types of experiences with nature reflect the growing area of environmental psychology which sees the individual as a social agent who seeks out and creates meaning in the natural environment (e.g., Kaplan and Kaplan, 1989; Saegert and Winkel, 1990; Rothenberg, 1995).

Furthermore, these types of nature-based experiences are often discussed and explored in close connection with attachment to place, and sense of place experiences. Such intense and profound feelings of attachment to the land, or a place, are ways of 'knowing' places. An author who continually explores concepts related to "sense of place", suggests that "bodies not only perceive but *know* places" (Casey, 1996, p. 34). Thus, to explore an area or place is to know it, and to re-explore an area is to come to know an area at a new and different level of understanding. Such explorations are not only of place, but of self, and such acts of explorations, in themselves, are adventures. In addition, Casey (1996) suggests that there is an 'interanimation' between the two, since "place integrates with body as much as body with place" (p. 22). Just as Berry (1990) explains that an exploration is essentially of self in place, then one could also suggest that it is the exploration of 'place in self'. Wilson (1984) explains these natural urges with his 'biophilia' hypothesis which he suggests is humankind's innate tendency to continually explore and discover all of life.

Comparing Soft Adventure Tourism Experiences

The phenomenological description of adventure may be compared with Bonington's concepts of adventure (as presented in Chapter III). After an extensive literature search, it was found that Bonington's study appeared to be the only comprehensive analysis of adventure experiences where the author attempted to better understand the nature of adventure. Therefore, this comparison will attempt to shed some light concerning apparent similarities and differences between soft adventure tourism experiences and non-tourism, high adventure experiences.

Bonington's analysis of adventure was based on his study of journal entries and interview transcripts from a number of people involved in a variety of grand adventures, such as solo Atlantic crossings, climbs of Everest and Annapurna mountains, and famous overland treks to the North and South Poles. Among his findings, Bonington (1981) discovered that individuals experienced an 'acute awareness of beauty' and an 'attunement to the natural surroundings'. For example, while describing one woman's extended travel experience, Bonington (1981) emphasised that "she had the same sense of oneness with the land she was travelling through that a climber needs in the mountains, or the sailor at sea" (p. 308). Findings such as these parallel that part of the study which describes a number of experiences with nature, as presented under the theme heading 'experiencing nature'. Experiences of wonder and awe at the magnificence of nature, as well as experiences of heightened awareness and connectedness, all coincide with Bonington's findings in this regard.

As previously mentioned in Chapter IV, one particular co-researcher of the study described his adventure experience in terms of two characteristics - the natural beauty of an area, and the isolated nature of the place. This finding is very similar to that of Schroeder (1996), who identifies both beauty and solitude as key environmental features that evoke such 'fragile experiences' with nature. Hammitt (1982) has shown that solitude is not so much complete isolation, as it is a form of privacy. This type of privacy occurs in situations where a person essentially has control, and which may include close companions. Many participants of this study, as well as the adventurers of Bonington's analysis, were alone or relatively isolated when they encountered such fragile experiences. In this study, for example, JP was operating a dog sled by himself and was alone when he came across a clearing and suddenly saw the beauty of the place and felt at peace. Other informants attempted to set themselves apart from the rest of the group or were near close companions, while they each experienced nature in their own way. It seems that Schroeder's concept, that solitude and beauty are two features which play a prominent role in participants' experiences with nature, may reveal another link between high adventure experiences and soft adventure tourism experiences.

One dimension of the adventure experience, which is related to attunement to the natural surroundings, which Bonington does not highlight, concerns experiences on a spiritual level. Although a few of the examples he uses may elude to spiritual experiences (e.g., "I was filled with an emotion I had not felt before - joy"), Bonington neither mentions the word, nor elaborates on this obviously important aspect of the adventure experience.

Bonington also suggests that individuals endeavour to test themselves (physically), as well as their craft and its limits. Although his purpose was not to test his 'craft' per se, JP's experience is somewhat similar to Bonington's concept of adventure in this regard. JP developed a goal in the midst of his trip - to become better at controlling the dog sled. Although he did not necessarily want to test his physical limits, he was determined to initially develop the necessary skills and then to effectively use them, as opposed to merely testing the *limits* of his craft. Other participants also commented on the need to test their skills. In addition, JP surely felt the 'elation of being in control of self' that Bonington believes is an element of the nature of adventure. JP reported feeling a sense of control after being able to effectively operate the dog sled and team of dogs, and consequently felt euphoric and on a high.

The findings in Chapter IV provide further insight into the role that the 'craft' itself plays in the adventure (tourism) experience. For Jeannette, the craft (or mode of transportation) was seen as a means to pursue freedom. For another participant, horse back travel during an unexpected rescue operation eventually led to a unique experience with nature. "It was like floating on air with a starlit sky, with shooting stars going over..." In another situation, travel by horse back resulted in an unexpected appreciation for the human/animal connection. "It gave me a feel for that," explained the co-researcher, "It was a powerful experience!" Finally, for Rob, the dog sled acted as a direct link to the experience of living history. This traditional means of travel allowed him "to hook into that other time period and to hook into another way of being on the Canadian landscape." Clearly, the mode of transportation appears to play a key role in the adventure experience. The mode of travel acts as a link to unique experiences, including experiences with nature and living history, for example. Even travel by foot is seen as having an effect on one's adventure experience. "There is a "connection between the human body and the ground when you walk," explained one co-researcher, such that one is able to gain "a sense of the place."

Similar to Anderson's (1970) 'Ulysses Factor', Bonington believes that adventure is a challenge of the body as well as the mind. In Bonington's analysis, many of the adventurers underwent enormous physical challenge (e.g., paddling across the Atlantic Ocean, or climbing Mount Everest), and/or engaged in activities which required immense mental effort and concentration from short, very brief moments, to relatively longer periods of time (months, or years). This dual challenge of body and mind also corresponds with findings of this study.

Another difference between the findings of this study and Bonington's analysis of grand adventures concerns the element of risk. From Bonington's perspective, there exists at least some level of risk within each adventure that he describes. Various levels of risk were also reported by many co-researchers of this study. However, a significant number of participants described their adventures which did not include any amount of risk. The experience of freedom that Jeannette felt and many of the experiences with nature, all show that, at least from certain perspectives, risk was not a part of their adventure experience (at least in the physical sense). Similarly, risk was not a part of Rob's dog sledding trip. Rob explains that his adventure was "relaxing and enjoyable." The typical notions of physical hardship, of 'conquering the land' and the subsequent risks, were not part of his adventure. The main challenge for Rob was to be "with another time and place." Perhaps, as is typically thought, physical risk is more of a natural occurrence (or consequence) of high adventures than it is during soft adventure tourism experiences. The fact that adventure is reported in terms of relaxing, enjoyable, and spiritual experiences, seems to suggest that adventure may be experienced risk free, in a physical sense, in some tourism settings.

Similarly, Bonington (1981) adamantly suggests that "adventure entails discomfort" (p. 307). Indeed, every one of the adventurers that he mentions, do in fact undergo quite a variety of discomforts during their often prolonged adventures. However, this contention may also be questioned in light of those adventure experiences which are centred on nature.

Bonington also recognises that goal-oriented adventurers are driven by a competitive urge (a desire to win and a desire for approval) and the gratification of ego. Although it may be tempting to perceive adventure tourists in the same light, it is difficult to know at this point whether competitiveness and ego gratification are a characteristic of the adventure experience for tourists. These concepts would be better addressed in future studies which focus on participant motivations for adventure.

The phenomenological description of adventure has been compared with Bonington's analysis of high adventures as an initial attempt to investigate the extent to which soft adventure tourism experiences differ from high adventure experiences, if at all. This comparison shows a number of similarities and differences. However, further research is needed in order to establish them more firmly. In addition, future comparisons between *soft* adventure tourism experiences and what may be considered *hard* adventure tourism experiences, may eventually help to define these two 'categories' of adventure more clearly.

Risk and an Alternative Perspective of Adventure

According to Ewert and Hollenhorst (1989), risk recreation, or adventure recreation, is characterised by a "deliberate seeking of risk and danger" on the part of the participant. However, it is questionable whether participants of this study deliberately sought risk and danger in their adventure tourism experiences. Instead, the motivations which participants identified (in Chapter V) included such reasons as the fulfilment of a long-held dream, the search for novelty or remoteness, or for personal renewal (perhaps a reflection of Parker's (1983) compensatory hypothesis which sees leisure as a form of compensation for shortcomings felt in one's work life). Risk was never mentioned as a motivating factor. Moreover, in situations of 'personal risk', the risk or danger came as a surprise and during unexpected events.

Ewert (1989) also contends that risk taking is central to the activity in outdoor adventure pursuits. However, the concept of what is central to the adventure *tourism* experience may be quite different. Indeed, Walle (1997) recently questioned the integrity of this 'adventure as risk' model, and put forth an 'insight model' of adventure based on his belief that participants seek insight. As the summary of Chapter IV reveals, the closest to what may be considered central to the adventure tourism experience, may be the three elements; novelty, the unexpected, and exploration. The phenomenological description of adventure also shows that the nature of these three characteristics are very closely interrelated, and it is from this core that the adventure experience becomes characterised into one or more of the many other themes.

Taking this perspective into consideration, then, the basic assumptions that participants deliberately seek risk, and that risk taking as central to the activity, both of which have been attributed to risk/adventure recreation and adventure pursuits, may be questioned when it comes to the adventure tourism experience. Furthermore, instead of perceiving an adventure experience from a risk point of view, the same experience could potentially be considered *first* from a perspective of novelty and exploration, and in a climate of unexpectedness. Indeed, this perspective may be evidenced from many of the co-researchers' initial responses concerning the nature of their adventure. When asked what was adventurous about their trip, a number of participants immediately stressed the concepts of novelty ("I had never been there before, I had never accessed back country skiing by helicopter before"), exploration, and/or the unknown ("I didn't know what to expect").

Ecotourism versus Adventure Tourism

Eagles (1995) is among many authors who see fundamental differences between ecotourism and adventure tourism. In particular, Eagles (1995) claims that the two niche markets are distinct in terms of, for example, their focus (extrinsic versus intrinsic), environmental attitudes (ecologistic versus utilitarian), and environmental impact (protection versus a negative perspective). At the same time, however, others have shown the extent to which adventure tourism is associated with ecotourism, in addition to nature and cultural tourism (e.g., Wight 1993), where characteristics of one type are found in the other tourism typologies. Yet this association has largely been conceptual, or based on random observations. Analysis of research findings may begin to reveal important connections (and differences), particularly as they may exist from the perspective of tourist experiences, a perspective that, for the most part, researchers have barely examined.

In this study, for example, a variety of cultural heritage experiences (ranging from learning about the local history and culture, to experiencing the local pubs), contributed significantly to the overall description of adventure. As the description of the adventure experience shows, to experience and learn about a culture *is* an adventure. A comparison between ecotourism and adventure tourism experiences is also enlightening.

Ecotourism was first defined by Ceballos-Lascurain (1987) as,

> travelling to undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring, and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural manifestations (both past and present) found in these areas. (as cited in Boo, 1990, p. xiv)

As well as having a cultural component, and a learning factor, ecotourism clearly involves the enjoyment of, and interaction with, the natural environment. Within the publication A Protected Areas Vision For Canada, Butler outlines eight characteristics of ecotourism, which,

> must promote positive environmental ethics, does not degrade the resource, concentrates on intrinsic rather than extrinsic values, is biocentric rather than

> homocentric in philosophy, must benefit the wildlife and environment, is a first-hand experience with the natural environment, has an 'expectation of gratification', and has a high cognitive and affective experiential dimension. (Canadian Environmental Advisory Council, 1991, p. 42)

Aside from, and notwithstanding the imperative inclusion of the ethical and philosophical dimensions inherent in Butler's impression of ecotourism, other characteristics are particularly relevant to this study. Specifically, the ideas that ecotourism deals with intrinsic values, 'is a first-hand experience with the natural environment', and that it consists of 'a high cognitive and affective experiential dimension', all directly coincide with the findings of this study. The phenomenological description revealed a number of instances where participants described experiences with nature as a major part of their adventures, or at least where nature played a significant role. For instance, the theme 'experiencing nature', demonstrates that participants' descriptions include such situations where: they made a conscious choice to involve themselves with nature; time was taken to notice, enjoy, and contemplate the natural surroundings and nature's beauty; natural (environmental) processes were deeply appreciated; as well as other situations of more profound experiences of wonder, peace, and a connection with the land.

Given the nature of these findings, then, it would appear that there are, indeed, striking similarities between certain principles of ecotourism and actual experiences of adventure tourists. Similarities such as these may also begin to 'close the gap' between traditional perceptions of ecotourism and adventure tourism which see the two more from a viewpoint of diversity (e.g., Eagles, 1995), than one of similarity. Further research into experiences of ecotourists could possibly determine whether they experience adventure, and the manner in which adventure is characterised in ecotourism experiences.

Defining Adventure Travel

The Canadian Tourism Commission (1995) defines adventure travel as "an outdoor leisure activity that generally takes place in an unusual, exotic, remote or wilderness setting, involves some form of unconventional means of transportation, and tends to be associated with high or low levels of physical activity" (p. 1). In an attempt to reach a more comprehensive definition, Sung, Morrison, and O'Leary (1997) suggest that adventure travel is "a trip or travel with the specific purpose of activity participation to explore a new experience, often involving perceived risk or controlled danger associated with personal challenges, in a natural environment or exotic outdoor setting" (p. 66).

These definitions, while not exhaustive, are presented here as representative examples of the number of concepts previously mentioned and listed in Table 1.. While these definitions are important from a theoretical perspective and may inform policy makers regarding tourism development, they fall short in providing an adequate sense of the experience of adventure. When compared with the definitions of adventure travel, it is easy to see that the description of the adventure experience (Chapter IV) is more comprehensive, richer, and deeper. The phenomenological description of adventure, therefore, adds to the understanding of the adventure tourism experience. Clearly, descriptions of adventure experiences, such as the one in Chapter IV, can aid in the refinement of explaining the breadth of adventure tourism experiences, not to mention the development of a more appropriate (and holistic) definition of adventure tourism. An expanded definition, it is believed, would affect how adventure travel is perceived, and may also eventually aid in identifying major trends and management issues (Walle, 1997).

While recognising the difficulty in expressing the range of adventure experiences, a definition of adventure tourism could at the least begin to attempt to address such characteristics of adventure as: the 'core' of adventure (novelty, exploration, and the unexpected); experiences with nature, including attunement to natural surroundings, feelings of connectedness, and sense of place experiences; spiritual experiences, including exploration of the self; freedom; learning; and perhaps living history and cultural experiences.

Adventure Education and Adventure Tourism

Another prominent feature of the findings of this study that requires discussion concerns the relationship of adventure tourism to adventure education. A number of components of the adventure tourism experience relate directly to the nature of adventure education, including its intended outcomes.

According to Wood and Gillis (1979) adventure education is "a term used to describe collectively those programs of a stressful nature which occur in an educational setting and which are based on the Outward Bound model" (p. 5). Adventure education is used in a variety of settings such as schools and summer camp environments, and has been associated with outdoor, environmental, and experiential education (e.g., Priest, 1986). A number of adventured-based programs are also used with various types of groups, from youth at risk to corporate training sessions, and, most importantly, are adapted to a variety of non-formal settings. These types of adventure education opportunities typically involve problem solving activities for participants who may potentially re-evaluate 'the self' in relation to the environment, peers, and leaders (Wood & Gillis, 1979).

The targeted results for participants of adventure education programs are improved interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships, and an overall enhancement of self-concept and self-esteem (Wood & Gillis, 1979; Schoel, Prouty, & Radcliffe, 1988). In addition to the obvious physical challenges with the environment, Hopkins and Putnam (1993) point out that more profound interactions occur (between participants and the environment), that are "difficult to express," but nevertheless form "a powerful theme running through adventure education" (p. 13).

An essential component of adventure education involves a debriefing, or reflective stage which is meant to 'process' the experience any time after the event. Many authors have emphasised the importance of reflecting on an experience, such that missing the opportunity for constructive guided reflection could hinder further growth and render the experience non-educative (e.g., Hopkins & Putnam, 1993). Knapp (1992) explains that in reflection, "the learner is either becoming aware, transforming, analysing, recapturing, reliving, exploring, or linking the parts of an experience" (p. 17). The goal or product of reflecting on an experience include: "new understandings or appreciations; commitments; the learning of meaningful and conceptually coherent information; or action" (Knapp, 1992, p. 17). Another goal of adventure based programs involves 'transfer', which is the process of taking lessons learned from one experience and reapplying them to other situations (Schoel et al, 1988). These goals may also lead to an eventual commitment toward activities of a personal or social nature.

The nature of the findings of this study show that many aspects of the soft adventure tours are very similar to characteristics of adventure education programs. For example, accounts from certain co-researchers reveal incidents that are already characteristic of adventure education experiences. In addition, the study shows that adventure education could potentially be incorporated into adventure tourism experiences.

The following are among a number of characteristics of soft adventure tours that are similar to conditions of various adventure education programs. First, adventure tours, for the most part, occur in unique physical and social environments, and often involve relatively small groups. Second, the nature of tourism activities are challenging and adventurous. Third, a guide is usually responsible for and leads participants, and therefore acts as a facilitator of participant experiences [Arnould and Price (1993) & Duenkel (1994), for example, illustrate the central role that a tour guide/leader plays]. Fourth, participants do re-evaluate themselves and improve their self-concept and self-esteem. Fifth, there are opportunities to debrief and reflect upon experiences (e.g., participants mentioned discussing their experiences with friends, acquaintances, and guides). Finally, there may also be opportunities for participants to transfer what they learned to other aspects of their lives (see Chapter V, Sue's 'profound and lasting effects').

While JP's adventure was not an Outward Bound trip, it nonetheless displays many of the characteristics of the Outward Bound model (see pages 19 and 20). Further, the research interview process acted as a reflective exercise that resulted in a debriefing of the experience, which correspond to the goals of adventure education.

JP's experience is similar to the Outward Bound process in the following manner: JP was in a unique physical and social environment; he was 'given' a problem solving task (to operate the dog sled and team of dogs); the challenge that he set for himself (to develop the essential skills) required that he draw on his mental, physical, and emotional resources; the activity led to stress and anxiety that he overcame through 'increased competence and mastery' (managing the dangerous and toughest downhill section of the trail); and as a result, his self-awareness and self-concept increased.

Although the actual experience had taken place a number of years ago, it wasn't until the research interview that JP was able to come to a deeper level of appreciation and understanding of his dog sledding experience and what it meant to him. The interview was the first time, JP recognised, that he had talked about his experience in depth, about his 'personal feelings'. JP discovered that reflecting on his experience helped him to realize that it is imperative for him to put these kinds of experiences in perspective. He then understood that if he could master dog sledding, an activity with which he had had no prior experience, then he could possibly 'carry over' or transfer his confidence to other types of activities such as rockclimbing.

In fact, the interview process is not unlike a type of debriefing or reflection strategy used by facilitators of adventure education programs. It is worth reiterating another participant's feelings about the interviews:

> I think the first thing that comes into my mind now is that it probably crystallized for me sort of the tracking, the progression of things as we talked along. It made me focus a little bit more on the way things were then and the way things are now and how I approach things differently and how I think about myself and my abilities and the likelihood of success when I venture into something that is untried and unknown because that's something that a person just doesn't, at least, I don't tend to do in a reflective mode, just normally. But through our discussion, of course, it forced me to make those connections or see where those links happened and what the results of them were.

The comments above show the extent to which the interview process has the potential to be educational for adventure tourists and that the act of interviewing may function as a debriefing exercise.

Through the process of continual analysis of the research data, it became apparent that for some participants, adventure tourism experiences parallel certain characteristics of adventure based programs. However, it appears from the interviews that the nature of the adventure tours, of which the co-researchers spoke, did not include any type of intentional adventure based programming. Despite the fact that participants (such as Sue) are able at times to naturally transfer what they learned to other areas of their personal lives, many other tourists could be missing valuable learning opportunities simply through the lack of any type of facilitated reflection.

Therefore, it could be said, that the potential exists for a number of tourists to benefit from adventure education strategies, even if the objective were as simple as providing some type of guided reflective exercise. It is also possible for some tour operators/guides to facilitate such experiences for their clients because they are in a position (physically) to do so. Adventure based education could be adapted in many ways within the tourism setting. Adventure education strategies can form a major component of an adventure tour offering, they can be limited to one or two fireside programmed activities, or even occur after participants have returned home from the adventure. Since adventure can be of the mind and spirit as much as a physical challenge (Hopkins and Putnam, 1993), adventure based programming could be targeted to that particular dimension which meets the desires and needs of each participant.

Clearly, there appears to be an opportunity to explore a variety of adventure education experiences within the tourism setting. Tour operators considering the use of adventure education as part of their tours would be wise to learn from existing programs that occur in summer leadership camp environments, for example, and other formal and non-formal settings. It should also be noted that the effectiveness of adventure education depends upon a clear understanding of the adventure education process, as well as accurately relating the process to specific individual needs. Adapting adventure education strategies to the tourism experience also implies an expanded role of, not only the guide, but the adventure tour, including an enhancement of its philosophy and goals.

Marketing Adventure Experiences

A number of authors have recognised the importance of investigating tourists experiences (e.g., Mannell & Iso-Ahola, 1987; Veal, 1992) and that a better understanding of adventure tourists, in particular, could lead to more effective marketing of adventure experiences (Walle, 1997; Wight, 1997). The discussion in the previous chapter regarding a broader understanding and perspective of adventure has certain implications for the adventure tourism industry.

Most businesses wish to be successful. A key marketing strategy which is usually employed involves the selection of a target market with the intention of satisfying the market with a particular product. A 'product' is referred to as a service (Teare, Moutinho, & Morgan, 1990), as well as a tourist experience (O'Sullivan, 1991). In a competitive industry, and especially for new businesses, it has become important to seek new markets in order to differentiate themselves from their competitors. One method of identifying a 'niche' market is through product innovation, or enhancement.

Walle (1997) suggests that the adventure tourism industry could be further segmented (based on his insight model) by offering new opportunities for tourists to gain insight. With this idea in mind, and with a broader understanding of adventure (as a result of the phenomenological description of adventure), the potential exists to transform or add to the adventure tourism product.

For example, an idea for a new product came about during an interview with one of the co-researchers who had years of experience taking trips in the Rocky Mountains. While on horse riding tours, the co-researcher walks or hikes on his own and uses the horses only for packing his camping gear. It occurred to him that,

> ... these horse-assisted trips, almost nobody's done them because the horse outfitters mostly want you to ride with them. They don't understand people hiking. Not only that, they don't understand why people *would* hike.

Consequently, it did not take long to begin to think that if horse outfitters understood how their horses could be used differently (without having to be ridden), and if they were open to the idea, then perhaps they could take advantage of this by offering wilderness experiences to those people who normally fear the thought of riding a horse, or simply want to hike. This type of idea illustrates how a new perspective may lead to unique programming opportunities which, in turn, could be promoted with a new target market in mind.

A significant and potential growth area concerning the marketing of adventure experiences concerns the variety of experiences with nature as described by participants of the study. To have the ability, while on a tour, to be relatively isolated from the rest of the group where one could watch and contemplate nature, and be open to experiences of wonder, peace, and a connection with the land, was extremely important for some people. Opportunities to experience the beauty of nature, for example, or to explore both the surrounding wilderness as well as the 'wilderness within' may very well be an innovative transformation of the adventure tourism product that could be promoted to a distinct segment of the market. In addition, adventure tours could also be targeted to those individuals who would be willing to experience an 'historical' adventure of 'living history', similar to Rob's experience. A product transformation such as this could explore the possibility of 'briefing' this type of targeted experience through various in depth preparatory activities borrowed from adventure based programs such as readings (off site) and discussions (on site).

Finally, it is conceivable for adventure education programs to be incorporated into a variety of adventure tourism experiences, which could take many forms. As previously noted, for example, tour operators and guides could facilitate reflective exercises for trip participants which could lead to 'new understandings or appreciations, commitments, or action'. This type of strategy could turn a simple experience into a more powerful one which could potentially see increasing numbers of tourists 'transfer' experiences and lessons to their personal life.

In summary, it would appear that there are opportunities to transform the adventure tourism product to accommodate a number of target markets. Promotional efforts can take advantage of marketing opportunities to explore the possibility of offering selected experiences with nature or to adapt adventure education strategies to adventure tourism experiences. Opportunities obviously exist for the innovative entrepreneur.

CHAPTER VII

UPON REFLECTION

As the title suggests, this chapter will reflect on the nature of the study. Reflecting on an experience provides an opportunity for new understandings and appreciations which may lead to 'action'. The responsibility, however, remains with both the author and reader in deciding where and how to 'transfer' what they have learned to future events. Consequently, this chapter will summarise the research process, outline implications for the adventure tourism industry, and propose recommendations for future research. Finally, the chapter will conclude with a summary of a few final thoughts about the value and importance of adventure.

The Nature and Significance of the Study

Adventure tourism is considered to be one of the fastest growing sectors of the tourism industry. This distinct area of the total tourism market has been further segmented into what is called soft and hard adventure tourism. Two questions which initially came to mind when considering research into this area were: What is adventurous about adventure tourism? And what is the difference between soft and hard adventure tourism? I also noticed that, from the tourism industry perspective, the concepts of adventure were limited compared to other notions of adventure as presented in adventure education models and other literature. I thought that since adventure is being marketed in the tourism industry, and if tourists report that they do indeed experience adventure, then they could potentially provide insight into the nature of adventure, based on their direct experiences. Clearly, I was developing an interest in the study of adventure itself, and its essential characteristics. In addition, many authors have adopted a risk-centred approach to the study of adventure as presented in adventure pursuits and adventure recreation research. Based on my travel experience, I questioned whether risk was central to the adventure tourism experience. Therefore, in an area rarely researched, there was an opportunity to begin to examine adventure within the adventure tourism setting. Thus, the purpose of the study was to explore the nature of adventure from tourists' perspectives, and in particular, how they experienced adventure.

This research into the nature of adventure for participants in soft adventure tourism provides a phenomenological description which is valuable to tour operators and other professionals in the industry. The description reveals an in depth look at a wide range of adventure experiences that go beyond the usual physical and risk elements of adventure. With a broader understanding of adventure, tour operators may begin to also better understand their clients, the powerful impact that their experiences have on them, and perhaps what they value in an adventure tour. Tour operators may also begin to think about expanding or enhancing the 'nature of adventure' aspect of their product and perhaps, for some, directing their efforts toward a specific target market. Other tour operators may utilize the findings of this study as a management tool in an attempt to add meaning to tourists' experiences through effective reflective exercises. This study is also important to other researchers and academics, especially those who are just beginning to develop a specific interest in the study of adventure and adventure tourism experiences (e.g., Sung et al., 1997; Walle, 1997).

The Study and its Discoveries

The fifteen individuals who participated in the study were selected on the basis of having been involved in dog sledding, back country skiing, or horse/trail riding adventure tourism experiences. Descriptive accounts of co-researchers' experiences were provided in the form of interviews as well as protocols (written accounts). The intent was to directly access particular adventure experiences in as much detail as possible. The continual analysis of emergent themes (Colaizzi, 1978) resulted in an in depth phenomenological description of the experience of adventure.

The themes which emerged from the experiences of the co-researchers, and which characterise the experience of adventure include: the imaginative experience, hesitation and doubt, fear, novelty, freedom, exploration, challenge, the unexpected, personal risk, remoteness, experiencing nature, the learning experience, the social experience, the comparative experience, transformation, and living history (being *with* another time and place). Each of the themes add significantly to the integrity of the overall description of the experience of adventure.

Some of the more surprising themes were 'the imaginative experience', 'freedom', and 'living history' since they add further dimensions to the adventure experience which are not usually associated with adventure. In addition, the lengthy description of experiences with nature, some of which presented powerful images, include: making contact with nature; experiences of heightened awareness; feelings of wonder; profound experiences of peace and connectedness to nature and to the land; as well as awe-inspiring, highly emotional, and spiritual experiences.

A summary of the description suggests that key aspects of the adventure experience include: 1) an openness to new experiences and an attitude of adventure are both essential to the experience, and 2) the three elements - novelty, exploration, and the unexpected - are closely related, and often integrate with each other, to form the 'core' of the adventure experience. It is from this core, that the adventure experience becomes characterised in the form of one or a combination of the other themes.

Implications for Adventure Tourism

The phenomenological description of the experience of adventure resulted in a broader understanding of adventure in soft adventure tourism and has certain implications for adventure tourism.

The researcher suggests that a more comprehensive definition of adventure travel should attempt to reflect a wider range of experiences than are presently portrayed, such as the variety of experiences with nature, living history, and spiritual experiences, for example. A new definition may also portray the 'core' of adventure which is presented as the interconnected elements of novelty, exploration, and the unexpected. Such an expanded definition may affect the way in which adventure is perceived as well as management issues (Walle, 1997).

The findings of the study reveal a number of similarities between aspects of soft adventure tours and key characteristics of adventure education programs. In addition, the study illustrates the potential for adventure education strategies to be incorporated into adventure tourism experiences. At the very least, reflective or debriefing exercises could easily be included as a component of adventure tours. Processing adventure experiences reportedly lead to positive results such as 'new understanding or appreciations', commitments, and the possibility of 'transferring' what was learned to new situations and environments. Consequently, many powerful learning opportunities exist for participants of adventure tours. Adapting adventure education strategies to the tourism experience, however, implies an expanded role of the guide, and of the tour itself, and suggests a level of understanding of the adventure education process.

With a recognition of the range of adventure experiences (as described by adventure tourists), and the possibility of incorporating adventure education strategies into the tourism experience, tour operators may wish to consider offering new opportunities to their clients. Tour operators may also take advantage of the situation by marketing specific adventure experiences, thereby enhancing or transforming their tourism product which, in turn, could conceivably help differentiate their product in a highly competitive industry.

Recommendations for Future Research

Although this study has provided insight into the nature of adventure in soft adventure tourism experiences, it has also raised a number of questions. Consequently, in a segment of the tourism industry which has not undergone a significant amount of formal research, additional studies could conceivably benefit researchers, academics, tour owners/operators and guides, as well as other tourism industry professionals. The following are proposed recommendations for further research initiatives:

1. Since a phenomenology of any experience can never be complete, and given that phenomenologists each interpret their findings differently, additional research into the nature of adventure could add to the findings of this study and offer new perspectives.
2. Further research into the nature of adventure in soft adventure tourism would benefit from the investigation of additional types of *soft* adventure products.
3. There is a need to compare the experiential nature of *soft* adventure tours with *hard* adventure tours to further explore the differences and similarities in experiences.
4. Continued comparative studies of ecotourism and adventure tourism experiences (including an examination into the extent to which ecotourists experience adventure) are required in order to better understand the connections between the two tourism typologies.
5. Research into the use of adventure education strategies in the adventure tourism setting could potentially benefit the tourism industry and lead to innovative adventure products and enhance tourism experiences.
6. Research efforts could further establish barriers to adventure and investigate any relationships to 'leisure constraints' research and theories. These types of studies may benefit individual tour operators and the tourism industry.
7. From a positivistic research perspective, the various themes, issues, and questions raised within this study may be relevant to those who may wish to apply the results of future studies to a large sample population.

Merits of the Phenomenological Approach

It may be difficult for some people to realize the relative value of this type of research. Phenomenology is not generalizable, from a statistical point of view, and it is not necessarily concerned with 'why' or 'how' a particular experience occurs. Instead, the aim of phenomenology is to come to a deeper and broader understanding of every day phenomena which are often overlooked or taken for granted. Hence, phenomenology attempts to add valuable insight by establishing "a renewed contact with original experience" (Van Manen, 1984, p. 37).

The phenomenological methodology which this study followed was able to fulfill its intended purpose. The findings resulted in a comprehensive and in depth description of the experience of adventure based on descriptions provided by tourists involved in dog sledding, back country skiing, and horse/trail riding adventures. The phenomenological description was able to expand the usual notions and concepts of adventure within the context of adventure tourists' experiences.

One criticism of this approach is that it may overlook a certain aspect(s) of the phenomenon which may seem apparently obvious to another researcher or to the reader. If this is the case, then the reader should be reminded that people experience an event in many different ways. No two experiences are the same. Nonetheless, it is intended that the reader 'connect' with certain characteristics of the phenomenon, and on other occasions recognise the phenomenological description "*as a possible experience*, which means *as a possible interpretation* of that experience" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 41). Finally, it is also important to note that no phenomenological study can ever be complete since we are, and will always be, continually learning about ourselves, and that further studies only deepen our understanding of the 'lifeworld'. "We gather other people's experiences because they allow us to become more experienced ourselves" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 62).

Final Thoughts

As I look back on this study, and particularly the process that I went through, I would have to say that it certainly was an adventure. I was engaged in an in depth exploration (through formal academic research) over an extended period of time, of an area which is very important to me. The 'discoveries' of this adventure, however, go beyond the findings of the study.

As I continually worked on various aspects of the study on a daily basis, I had many opportunities to reflect on my own adventures in a way that brought them back to life with new meaning and understanding. It had been a long time since I had recalled the nature of the sixty-three day, 2,000-kilometre Voyageur expedition (we retraced the Voyageur route from Montreal to Old Fort William/Thunder Bay in thirty-six foot canoes) which I mentioned in the first chapter. I was taken back to the expedition one day when I came upon a memento of the adventure in the form of a type of medallion. The importance of the medallion is not in its economic value, but lies within the essence of what it symbolizes. "Perseverance" is all it says, under the insignia of the North West Company, as it would have existed more than two hundred years ago.

This medallion and its message had a special significance for me at the time I received it at the end of our expedition. Quite simply, I had, over time, come to a deep appreciation for, and understanding of what it means to persevere (an extended expedition, often under strenuous and stressful conditions) because I had *lived* it. The medallion became equally important for me during this research study. As I thought about the medallion in front of me, I began to recapture the meaning and essence of its message. I then decided to make an effort at transferring what I had learned to my new situation (being involved in graduate studies and conducting research). While it was not easy to do, I found that I *was* able to, at times, intentionally transfer the experience of perseverance to the nature of my graduate studies. I was also able to apply other 'lessons learned' from the Voyageur experience to my present life.

The act of transferring was empowering, and because I went through this experiential process, I was able to expand my understanding of the nature of adventure. Clearly, the power of an adventure lies in the adventurers ability to reflect on their experience(s) and transfer new understandings, appreciations, and information to new situations.

As I previously mentioned, one of my first thoughts regarding the nature of this area of research was, "What's so adventurous about adventure tourism?" Despite the fact that I set out to interview people about their adventure tours, I was not sure whether they would think their trips were adventurous or not. Perhaps they wouldn't, or perhaps adventure would only be a very small part of what they experienced. I did not know what to expect.

To my surprise, and satisfaction, the response from the co-researchers was extremely positive. "Yes it was an adventure." "Oh definitely!" There was no doubt that all but one of the co-researchers strongly believed that what they had experienced was an adventure. However, even *that* person (who did not believe that his experience was an adventure) contributed to the study in a way which was virtually unexpected.

Most people love adventure. They like to hear and read about adventures, and they love to get involved, to try something new. Is the desire to explore, innate, as some suggest it is? Perhaps we'll never know. Combine this passion for adventure with travel, however, and the effects can be seen around the globe. It is apparent that increasing numbers of people are fulfilling their desires for adventure through travel and tourism.

Adventure, whether its physical, mental, or spiritual, is a powerful phenomenon. It's powerful because it has the ability to transform people. Those people who, throughout the ages, have realised this fact, have 'used' adventure to bring about positive changes in people. There are countless opportunities to guide new-growth experiences in the tourism industry as well. And if more people began to 'practice' adventure, through *openness* and adopting an *attitude of adventure*, then they could, as Nansen (1967) believes, begin to "overcome the present difficulties" of the world. Perhaps Whitehead (1947) put it best:

> A race preserves its vigour so long as it harbours a real contrast between what has been and what may be; and so long as it is nerved by the vigour to adventure beyond the safeties of the past. Without adventure civilization is in full decay. (p. 360)

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APPENDIX A: Interview Schedule

Interview One: (from general discussion to phenomenology of experience)

Tell me about your trip. What did you do? What happened?

What was the adventure? What part or parts? What was adventurous about it? Think for a moment and then try to concentrate on one incident or one particular moment. What were you doing at the time? What did you see, hear? What were you thinking? What did you feel emotionally? Try to describe your experience in as much detail as possible.

Interview Two: (if needed)

More focused questions based on the previous interview and relating to particular descriptions of adventure and the meaning given to it.

APPENDIX B: Protocol Instructions

Dear tour participant,

I am a University of Alberta graduate student conducting research into people's experiences of adventure. Have you just completed an adventurous trip or tour? Do you consider it an adventure?

If you do, and if you would like to help in my study, I would appreciate your assistance by writing *one or a few pages* about your experience(s). Instructions for writing are given below. I find that many people enjoy this and get a lot out of reflecting on their experience. Your name will be kept confidential and your submission will only be one among many others.

Writing Instructions

I would like you to write about your adventure experience or experiences. What was the adventure? What part or parts? What was adventurous about it?

Think for a moment and then try to stick to one incident or one particular moment. What were you doing at the time? What did you see, hear? What were you thinking? What did you feel emotionally? Try to describe the experience in as much detail as possible.
Again, be descriptive of that particular adventurous incident or moment.

Please mail your descriptions to:
Phil Burak
11023-89 Ave.
Edmonton, AB
T6G 0Z7
or e-mail to: pburak@gpu.srv.ualberta.ca

Thank you kindly,

Phil Burak

p.s. To begin, you may use the other side of this letter. Use an additional page if necessary.

APPENDIX C: Informed Consent for Interviewees

University of Alberta

Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation

Adventure and Adventure Tourism Research

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Research Project Title: The nature of adventure in soft adventure tourism.

Principal investigator: Phil Burak, h (403) 432-0670
Co-investigator: Dr. G. Swinnerton, w (403) 492-1025

The purpose of this study is to gain an in depth understanding of the experience of adventure in soft adventure tourism. Soft adventure tourism products have been characterised as providing more comfortable accommodations during less strenuous activities where previous experience is not essential to participation. You have been identified as someone who believes that their experience or 'tour' was adventurous in some way. Your participation is completely voluntary.

Each person will be interviewed from one to a maximum of three times. During these interviews you will be asked to describe one or more adventurous incident(s) or event(s) as you experienced it/them. These interviews (from one half to one and a half hours in length) will be audio-taped and later transcribed. In order to protect anonymity, the tapes and their associated transcripts will be assigned a pseudo name and locked in a filing cabinet. After the first interview, efforts will be made to make the information available to you, so that you may comment on the accuracy of the investigator's interpretation of your 'data.'

The final research project, including anonymous quotations, will be made available upon request and will be presented as part of a Masters thesis. The research findings may be published in a journal but the anonymity and confidentiality of the subjects will be ensured. Although there may be more direct benefits to participants in this study, the research findings may assist tourism researchers, tour operators, and professionals within the tourism industry toward a deeper understanding of tourists' experiences.

University of Alberta

Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation

The Nature of Adventure in Soft Adventure Tourism

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Principal investigator: Phil Burak, h (403) 432-0670
Co-investigator: Dr. G. Swinnerton, w (403) 492-1025

This is to certify that I, ______________________________ (print name) hereby agree to participate as a volunteer in the above named project.

I understand that there will not be any health risks to me resulting from my participation in this research. However, the potential benefits of this research to me include increased self-knowledge.

I hereby give permission to be interviewed, and for these interviews to be recorded on audio-tape. I understand that following the researcher's oral defence, the tapes, transcripts, and field notes will be destroyed. I understand that the information may be published, but my name will be kept anonymous and confidential.

I understand that I am free to refuse to answer questions during interviews. I also understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and terminate my participation in this project at any time without penalty. I have been given the opportunity to ask whatever questions I desire, and they have been answered to my satisfaction. I acknowledge receipt of this consent form.

Signed,

____________________	____________________	____________________
Participant	Witness	Researcher

____
Date

APPENDIX D: Informed Consent for Participants Providing Protocols

University of Alberta

Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation

Adventure and Adventure Tourism Research

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Research Project Title: The nature of adventure in soft adventure tourism.

Principal investigator: Phil Burak, h (403) 432-0670
Co-investigator: Dr. G. Swinnerton, w (403) 492-1025

The purpose of this study is to gain an in depth understanding of the experience of adventure in soft adventure tourism. Soft adventure tourism products have been characterised as providing more comfortable accommodations during less strenuous activities where previous experience is not essential to participation. You have been identified as someone who believes that their experience or 'tour' was adventurous in some way. Your participation is completely voluntary.

Each person will be asked to provide a written description of their experience. You will be asked to describe one or more adventurous incident(s) or event(s) as you experienced it/them. These written descriptions can be from one to as many pages as you require to adequately describe your adventure. In order to protect anonymity, the written descriptions will be assigned a pseudo name and locked in a filing cabinet.

The final research project, including anonymous quotations, will be made available upon request and will be presented as part of a Masters thesis. The research findings may be published in a journal but the anonymity and confidentiality of the subjects will be ensured. Although there may be more direct benefits to participants in this study, the research findings may assist tourism researchers, tour operators, and professionals within the tourism industry toward a deeper understanding of tourists' experiences.

University of Alberta

Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation

The Nature of Adventure in Soft Adventure Tourism

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Principal investigator: Phil Burak, h (403) 432-0670
Co-investigator: Dr. G. Swinnerton, w (403) 492-1025

This is to certify that I, ______________________________ (print name) hereby agree to participate as a volunteer in the above named project.

I understand that there will not be any health risks to me resulting from my participation in this research. However, the potential benefits of this research to me include increased self-knowledge.

I am willing to provide a written description (protocol) of my experience(s) and hereby, give permission for it to be used in the study. I understand that following the researcher's oral defence, the written description(s) will be destroyed. I understand that the information may be published, but my name will be kept anonymous and confidential.

I understand that I am free to refuse to reveal personal information. I also understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and terminate my participation in this project at any time without penalty. I have been given the opportunity to ask whatever questions I desire, and they have been answered to my satisfaction. I acknowledge receipt of this consent form.

Signed,

____________________	____________________	____________________
Participant	Witness	Researcher

____
Date